

CONSTITUTION —  
— AND FORMS.



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Reformed Church in the  
United States.

The constitution of the  
Reformed church in the





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# CONSTITUTION

OF THE

## REFORMED CHURCH

IN THE

## UNITED STATES.

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Approved by the General Synod of Allentown,  
May, 1905.

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Adopted by the Classes.

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Declared Adopted by the General Synod of York,  
May, 1908.

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**The Publication Board of the Reformed Church in the U. S.,  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.**



# THE CONSTITUTION

of the  
Reformed Church in the United  
States.



## PREAMBLE.

For the maintenance of truth and order in accordance with the Word of God, the Reformed Church in the United States ordains this Constitution to be its fundamental law for government, doctrine and worship, and declares the same to have binding authority on all its members, congregations and judicatories.

## PART I.

### MEMBERS—CONGREGATIONS—OFFICES.

#### SECTION I.

##### Members.

ARTICLE 1. All baptized persons are members of the Church, under its care and subject to its government and discipline.

ART. 2. Persons received into full communion with the Church by confirmation, certificate, or renewal of profession shall be

regarded as communicant members. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Church and can be deprived of them only by due process of discipline.

ART. 3. Those baptized in infancy shall be received into full communion with the Church by confirmation, and unbaptized adults by baptism and confirmation. In both cases they shall first receive proper instruction in the truths of the gospel and give satisfactory evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

ART. 4. Members of other branches of the Christian Church, in good and regular standing, may be received into the membership of the Reformed Church by certificate of dismissal. If, however, such certificate cannot be obtained, they may be received by a renewal of their profession of faith in Christ. This does not preclude the Spiritual Council from deciding in either case, before they are thus received, whether or not they shall be instructed in the fundamental truths of the Christian religion as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism.

ART. 5. Members who on account of change of residence or for other proper reasons desire to change their membership from one congregation to another congregation of the Reformed Church, shall ob-



tain a certificate of dismissal and as soon as possible unite with the other congregation. The Spiritual Council dismissing them shall immediately communicate the fact to the Spiritual Council of the congregation to which they have been dismissed; and when they are received the latter shall promptly notify the former of their reception. Members dismissed shall be amenable to the congregation dismissing them until they shall have been received by the other congregation. A certificate of dismissal shall be valid for only one year from its date.

ART. 6. It is the duty of church members to live sober, righteous and godly lives, and to labor faithfully in bringing others to Christ. They shall obey the laws and rules of life prescribed in the Word of God and abide by the Constitution of the Church, and contribute liberally, in proportion to their means, to the support of the gospel and for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. Every member shall attend faithfully the public services of the Church and shall engage diligently in private devotions; and those who have been confirmed shall partake of the Lord's Supper at least once a year. Parents shall give special attention to the Christian training of the members of their household.

## SECTION 2.

### Congregations.

ART. 7. A congregation of the Reformed Church in the United States is a body of Christians accepting the Bible as the Word of God and the Heidelberg Catechism as its standard of faith and doctrine, and organized agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution of the Church.

ART. 8. Whenever it is desired to organize a congregation, those persons who are willing to enter into such organization shall sign the following memorial and address the same to the Classis within whose bounds the congregation is to be organized:—

“We, whose names are hereunto affixed, desiring to be organized as a congregation, that we may have better facilities for enjoying the holy ordinances of the Christian Church, do hereby petition the Classis of .....to organize us under the name of .....congregation, in the township (town, or city) of....., county of ..... and State of....., and declare our readiness to be governed by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.”

Date..... Signed .....

If the Classis approves of the proposed organization, it shall appoint a committee to superintend the election of elders and deacons, and to induct them into office. After the acts thus authorized have been performed and have been sanctioned by the Classis, the organization shall be enrolled as a regular congregation of the Reformed Church in the United States. If, however, local conditions require it, a congregation may be duly organized by a missionary, or a minister doing missionary work, acting with the consent of the Classis under whose jurisdiction the congregation is to be received. Application for admission to Classis must be made as soon as possible after the organization is effected.

A congregation, whether independent or belonging to another denomination, which conforms to the requirements of the Reformed Church in the United States, may be admitted to membership.

ART. 9. Whenever a congregation desires to become an incorporated body, a draft of the proposed articles of incorporation and the constitution of the congregation shall be submitted to the Classis for approval before the charter is presented to the civil authorities. A charter shall not be approved that does not bind the congregation to be an organic member of the Re-

formed Church in the United States, and to be governed by its Constitution and laws. In all cases, unless there are legal difficulties, the Consistory shall in the charter be constituted the trustees of the congregation.

ART. 10. Each congregation shall adopt a Constitution and By-laws for its own government. Such Constitution and By-laws must be in accordance with its charter and with the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ART. 11. Each congregation shall hold an annual meeting. The Consistory may call a special meeting of the congregation, and shall at the written request of one-tenth of the communicant members issue a call for such meeting within two weeks after the request has been received. One week's previous public notice shall be given of the time, place and purpose of a special congregational meeting. A full and accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings shall be kept.

ART. 12. To the trustees shall be committed the care and control of the property of the congregation, whether real or personal, and of all moneys and legacies. They shall hold the property as a sacred trust for the congregation, keep the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation in proper repair, and prevent the

use of the house of God for improper purposes. In matters of a general nature, such as the purchasing or selling of property, the borrowing of money, and the remodeling or erection of buildings, the trustees can determine nothing finally without the consent of a majority of those communicant members of the congregation assembled at a meeting called for the purpose, of which meeting at least two weeks' previous public notice shall be given.

ART. 13. The common interests of two or more congregations united in one pastoral charge shall be committed to a Joint Consistory, composed of the members of the Consistories of the congregations included in the charge. A congregation shall not withdraw from such charge without permission of Classis.

ART. 14. On the dissolution of a congregation the Classis with which it was connected shall have jurisdiction over its members and transfer them to the congregation which they may select. Classis also shall have charge and control of the property of said dissolved congregation, if the laws of the State do not forbid it, and shall determine any case of discipline begun by the Spiritual Council and not completed. And if a congregation shall have withdrawn from connection with the Reformed

Church in the United States, the official character of the elders, deacons and trustees shall immediately cease, and the Classis to which it belonged shall succeed to all rights, powers and prerogatives of the trustees touching the property, real and personal, provided such successions do not conflict with the civil law.

### SECTION 3.

#### Offices.

ART. 15. The Offices of the Reformed Church are:

1. The Office of Minister of the Word.
2. The Office of Elder.
3. The Office of Deacon.

#### I.

##### I. MINISTERS OF THE WORD.

ART. 16. A Minister of the Word is a member of the Church, called by Christ to the ministry of reconciliation, and ordained and consecrated by prayer and the laying on of hands to preach the gospel, to exercise pastoral oversight, to dispense the holy sacraments, in conjunction with the elders to administer Christian discipline, and to give himself wholly to the service of Christ in His Church.

ART. 17. A minister receiving a call from a charge and accepting the same shall present said call, together with his acceptance of it, to Classis for consideration; and if the call is confirmed, provision shall be made at once for his installation as pastor. A call, however, shall not be confirmed unless it provides for adequate support of the pastor, and unless the salary of the preceding pastor shall have been paid or satisfactory arrangements for its payment have been made; nor shall any Classis refuse to confirm a call unless there are strong reasons for withholding such confirmation. A minister having received a call from a charge shall not move into it, nor perform pastoral duties in it, without first having obtained the consent of Classis. Every pastor shall reside within the bounds of his charge, unless Classis gives him permission to reside elsewhere.

ART. 18. Every pastor, or the secretary of the Consistory, shall keep a complete record of all baptisms, confirmations, communicants, receptions by certificate, renewals of profession, dismissions, erasures of names, suspensions, excommunications, marriages and deaths. The record shall be the property of the congregation.

ART. 19. A pastor desiring to resign his charge shall lay his resignation before

the Consistory or Joint Consistory, which shall take action on it as soon as possible; but if the pastor or Consistory desires it, the resignation shall be laid before the congregation or congregations for action. The resignation, and the consequent action of the Consistory, or of the congregation or congregations, shall then as soon as possible be laid before the Classis for action. When in the opinion of three-fourths of the members of the Consistory or Joint Consistory the welfare of the charge requires it, the Consistory or Joint Consistory shall make a written request to the pastor for his resignation. If the pastor, or the Consistory or Joint Consistory, desires it, the request shall be laid before the congregation or congregations for action. If the majority of the congregation or congregations sustains the request, the matter shall then as soon as possible be referred to Classis for action. But if the request is not brought before the congregation or congregations, the matter shall be referred directly to the Classis. A pastor shall not leave his charge before his resignation has been approved and the pastoral relation has been dissolved by Classis.

ART. 20. A minister shall not officiate in the charge of another minister without his consent; nor shall he serve a vacant



congregation or charge as a regular supply without the consent of the Classis to which the congregation or charge belongs. He shall be a member of the Classis within whose bounds he resides, unless he shall have retired from the active duties of the ministry; or unless he is connected with an Institution or a Board of the Church, in which case he may be a member of any Classis connected with the Synod or Synods under whose care or by whose authority the Institution or Board acts.

ART. 21. A minister shall continue in the service of the sanctuary as long as he lives, unless he has the consent of Classis to devote himself to a secular calling. Educational, or other direct, work for the Church shall not be regarded as a secular calling.

ART. 22. If a minister not otherwise chargeable with an offense renounces the jurisdiction of the Reformed Church in the United States by joining another denomination without being regularly dismissed to it, Classis shall record the fact and erase his name from the roll. If charges are pending against him, he may be tried on them. If the minister against whom the charges are pending shall have abandoned the ministry or declared himself independent, his name shall be erased, or he shall be deposed or excommunicated, as the case may require.

ART. 23. A minister compelled by age or infirmity to retire from the active duties of the ministry, shall retain his right to a seat and vote in his Classis and in the Synods, and to perform ministerial acts within the restrictions specified in Article 20 of this Constitution.

If the retiring minister lacks the means of self-support, his Classis shall report his name to the authorities appointed by the General Synod, in case the General Synod shall have made provision for the relief of ministers according to Article 117 of this Constitution.

ART. 24. A minister from another denomination, before he shall be admitted into the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States, shall present a certificate of dismission, and shall be examined as to his orthodoxy and the purity of his intentions. If his application is approved, he shall, upon signing the formula prescribed for licentiates, be admitted by a two-thirds vote of the Classis to which he has applied for reception.

## 2. TEACHERS OF THEOLOGY.

ART. 25. A Teacher of Theology is a Minister of the Word who has been elected and inaugurated as a professor in a Theological Seminary of the Church. He shall

be chosen in such manner as may be determined by the Synod or Synods to whose jurisdiction the Seminary is subject.

ART. 26. A person shall not be elected a Teacher of Theology whose views are not in accord with the faith and doctrines of the Reformed Church in the United States and who does not approve of its mode of government, forms of worship and distinctive customs.

ART. 27. Before a Teacher of Theology enters upon the duties of his office, he shall be inaugurated under the direction of the Synod or Synods by which he was chosen. At his inauguration he shall solemnly affirm the following declaration in a public assembly:—

“You, N——— N———, Professor-elect of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States, at . . . . ., acknowledge sincerely before God and this assembly that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are called canonical, are divinely inspired Scriptures and therefore credible and authoritative; that they contain all things which relate to the faith, the practice and the hope of the righteous, and are the only rule of faith and practice in the Church of God; that, consequently, traditions, as they are called, and mere

conclusions of reason that are contrary to the clear testimony of these Scriptures cannot be received as rules of faith or of life. You acknowledge, further, that the doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism is in accordance with the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. You declare sincerely, that in the office you are about to assume you will make the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth of the doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the basis of all your instructions, and faithfully maintain and defend the same in your preaching and writing as well as in your instructions. You declare, finally, that, according to the ability which God may grant you, you will so labor that, with the divine blessing, the students entrusted to your care may become enlightened, pious, faithful and zealous ministers of the gospel, who shall be sound in the faith." The Professor-elect shall answer, "I so declare and affirm."

ART. 28. Teachers of Theology shall explain the Holy Scriptures and defend the pure doctrine of the gospel against errors. In their instructions to the theological students it shall be their principal aim to make them well acquainted with the true sense of the Holy Scriptures, and prepare them to preach the gospel with power and

effect. In this service they are required to instruct the students in Exegetical, Historical, Systematic and Practical Theology.

ART. 29. A Teacher of Theology shall continue in office during his life, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified for his duties by heterodoxy or immorality, or by physical or mental infirmities.

ART. 30. If four ministers and four elders of the Church present to the Board of Visitors of any Theological Seminary a document asserting that, for cause or causes named in Article 29 of this Constitution, a Teacher of Theology is disqualified for his position, said Board shall institute a careful examination, and if the charge is well founded shall refer the matter for final disposition to the Synod or Synods under whose authority the Teacher of Theology holds his position. In all things except his position as Teacher of Theology he is amenable to the Classis to which he belongs.

ART. 31. A Teacher of Theology who has been rendered incapable of further service by infirmities shall not be displaced without having such provision made for his support as his necessities may require and as the Synod or Synods may be able to make. After the age of seventy he shall be declared Professor Emeritus. A Teach-

er of Theology desiring to resign his office shall, at least six months before his resignation is to take effect, give notice in writing of his intention to the Board of Visitors or other proper officers.

### 3. LICENTIATES.

ART. 32. A licentiate is a member of the Church who, having completed a prescribed course of theological studies and having passed a satisfactory examination by a Classis, has been authorized to preach the gospel and to accept a call from a pastoral charge or a missionary field.

ART. 33. An applicant for licensure shall present a written application to his Classis, together with his certificate from the Theological Seminary or Institution in which he studied. He shall submit to an examination, which shall be open to all the members of Classis and embrace at least the main subjects taught in the Theological Seminaries of the Reformed Church in the United States. Particular attention shall be paid to his piety, the purity of his intentions in seeking the ministry, his orthodoxy, and his ability to preach the gospel. The report of such examination shall not enter into particulars, but simply state the result as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

ART. 34. For good reasons licensure may be granted to applicants who have not

completed the course of study prescribed for the Theological Seminaries, but in all such cases a two-thirds vote of the Classis shall be required to authorize the licensure.

ART. 35. The examination of the applicant having proved satisfactory and the report of the examiners having been adopted, he shall read aloud before Classis the following formula and subscribe the same in a book kept for that purpose:—

“I hereby testify that I honestly and truly accept the doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism as in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and promise faithfully to preach and defend the same. I also declare and promise that I will carefully observe all the ordinances in accordance with the Word of God which now are or may hereafter be enacted by the authorities of the Church, and that I will cheerfully submit to all the admonitions and decisions of these authorities so long as I remain in connection with the Reformed Church in the United States.

“In testimony whereof I hereunto subscribe my name and the date.”

Name..... Date.....

Having thus attested his adherence to the doctrines and discipline of the Reformed Church in the United States, he shall be furnished with a certificate of licensure,

bearing the seal of Classis and the signatures of the President and Stated Clerk; and his name shall be placed on the clerical roll.

ART. 36. A licentiate is permitted to preach the Word, but shall not administer the sacraments, perform the rite of confirmation, pronounce the benediction, nor solemnize marriage. He is under the care and jurisdiction of his Classis, must attend its meetings and submit a written report of his labors, but he cannot vote in Classis nor can he represent it in a higher judicatory.

ART. 37. A licentiate shall not be ordained before he is twenty-one years of age and until he has received and accepted a call from a pastoral charge, or has been called to a mission or to be a Teacher of Theology in an authorized theological institution of the Reformed Church in the United States. A licentiate who has received and accepted a call from a pastoral charge shall be ordained by the Classis within whose bounds the charge is located. A licentiate who has received and accepted a call to teach theology shall be ordained by the Classis to which he belongs when he accepts the call.

ART. 38. A licentiate shall not preach statedly for a vacant congregation or pastoral charge without the consent of Classis. He shall be a member of that Classis within



whose bounds he resides, except as provided for in the case of ministers in Article 20 of this Constitution.

ART. 39. Before licentiates from other denominations can be received into a Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States, they shall be examined in the same manner as students for the ministry and shall subscribe the formula prescribed for licentiates.

#### 4. STUDENTS FOR THE MINISTRY.

ART. 40. A student for the ministry is a member of the Church who, believing himself called to become a minister of Christ, enters upon a course of study to prepare himself for that office.

ART. 41. Every student for the ministry shall place himself under the care of a Classis. When any one applies to be received as such, the Classis shall inquire as to his fitness, and if the result of the inquiry is satisfactory shall take him under its care and exercise proper supervision over his studies and deportment. He shall pursue his course of study in a theological institution of the Reformed Church in the United States, unless Classis permits him to study elsewhere. This permission can be given only if it does not conflict with any previous obligations he may have assumed.

ART. 42. At each annual meeting of his Classis a student for the ministry shall submit a written report of the progress he has made in his studies, and also his official reports from the institution in which he is studying. He shall not exercise ministerial functions, but with the consent of the faculty may occasionally preach after his first year in the Seminary.

## II.

### ELDERS AND DEACONS.

ART. 43. An elder is a member of the Church chosen by a congregation and ordained to his office by prayer and the laying on of hands to assist and support the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the Church.

ART. 44. Elders shall take heed to themselves that they may be an example unto others, shall faithfully watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation, shall maintain order in the house of God, shall aid in visiting the sick, and shall contribute according to their ability to the edification and consolation of all the members. They shall also provide the elements for the Lord's Supper, when requested by the pastor.

ART. 45. A deacon is a member of the Church chosen by a congregation and ordained to his office by prayer and the laying

on of hands to gather the offerings of the congregation for the pastor's salary and other purposes, to attend to the temporal affairs of the congregation, except such as are specified in Article 12 of this Constitution, and to look after the poor and destitute.

ART. 46. Elders and deacons shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast at a congregational meeting and may be re-elected. Their number in a congregation and their term of office shall be determined by the Constitution and By-laws of the congregation. When elected for the first time they shall be publicly ordained to their office. After their ordination they, with those who have been re-elected, shall be installed. Unless dismissed to another congregation they shall remain in office until their successors are inducted into office.

ART. 47. Members called to the office of elder or deacon shall be of exemplary life and conduct (see Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Tim. 3:8-13), that the congregation may be edified. On this account light-minded, contentious, or otherwise improper persons shall not be chosen to these offices.

ART. 48. Nominations for the offices of elder and deacon shall be made by the Consistory, which shall present the names of one or two persons for each officer to be elected.

Public notice of the nominations shall be given from the pulpit at least one week before the election. At the meeting for the election one additional person for each officer to be elected may be nominated by the congregation. A person shall not be voted for unless regularly nominated. All nominees must be in full communion with the Church and earnestly devoted to the cause of Christ. If possible each congregation shall have at least two elders and two deacons.

ART. 49. The Reformed Church in the United States, recognizing the consecration and devotion of women to the service of the Church from the time of the apostles to the present day, and the value and importance of their work in all forms of service, approves and authorizes the work of deaconesses in the congregations, and the founding, by Consistories, Classes or Synods, of deaconess' Homes for the training of deaconesses. A deaconess shall minister to the poor, the needy, the sick, the spiritually destitute, and aid in the education of the young and the visitation of strangers and others in a parish.

PART II.  
**JUDICATORIES.**

SECTION I.

**Judicatories in General.**

ART. 50. The judicatories are :

1. The Consistory.
2. The Spiritual Council.
3. The Classis.
4. The Synod.
5. The General Synod.

They take cognizance only of ecclesiastical matters, and have authority to require obedience to the laws of Christ and His Church and to discipline the disobedient.

ART. 51. Cases over which a lower judicatory has original jurisdiction can be brought before a higher judicatory only by reference, complaint, or appeal.

ART. 52. Classes or Synods which prevailingly use the same language in public worship shall not be organized within the same territory. But in the bounds of Classes which are prevailingly English, German Classes, or Classes of other languages, may be organized, with the consent of a majority of all the Classes concerned and of the Synod to which they belong; and so also, conversely, in the case of Ger-

man Classes, or Classes of other languages, English Classes may be organized in the same way.

ART. 53. From the regular credentials of the delegates, *primarii* and *secundi*, the Stated Clerk of a Classis, a Synod, or the General Synod shall prepare the roll in advance of the stated meeting. Irregular or disputed credentials shall be referred, immediately after the organization of the judicatory, to a special committee, which shall report within twenty-four hours after its appointment. The sessions of every judicatory shall be opened and closed with religious services.

ART. 54. Each Classis and Synod and the General Synod shall elect a President, a Stated Clerk, and such other officers as they respectively deem necessary, who shall hold their offices until their successors are elected at the next stated meeting. The Stated Clerk, however, may be elected for a longer period.

ART. 55. When a judicatory meets as a delegated body, the delegates to it shall be elected by the judicatories which they respectively represent from among their members, and in all such elections at least a double number of persons shall be nominated. The members shall have the right, however, to vote for any enrolled member,

whether nominated or not. Tellers shall be appointed to distribute, collect and count the ballots, and shall report the number of votes cast for any member to the President, who shall then declare the result. Those having the highest number of votes shall be the *primarii*, and an equal number having the next highest number of votes shall be the *secundi*, who shall succeed the *primarii* in the order of the number of votes received in both cases. In case delegates have received an equal number of votes, their names shall be arranged on the list in alphabetical order.

ART. 56. Acting elders only shall be elected delegates to judicatories. They shall have the same rights and privileges in a judicatory as Ministers of the Word.

ART. 57. Delegates to a judicatory shall be punctual in attending its meetings and shall remain during the whole of its sessions. They are amenable for their tardiness or absence to the judicatory which elected them, which also must provide for the expenses incurred in attending to their duties unless paid by the higher judicatory.

ART. 58. At a special meeting of a judicatory action can be taken only on the items of business specified in the call.

ART. 59. If unforeseen circumstances should render it necessary, either the time

or the place, or both, of the stated meeting of a Classis, a Synod, or the General Synod, may be changed by the President and Stated Clerk; provided that for a Classis two weeks', for a Synod four weeks', and for the General Synod six weeks', previous notice is given by the President and Stated Clerk through a circular addressed to each member of the judicatory.

ART. 60. At least one member of every committee appointed by a Classis, a Synod, or the General Synod shall be an elder; an exception may be made in the case of a committee to ordain a licentiate or to install a minister.

ART. 61. Delegates from bodies in correspondence with the General Synod shall be recognized as advisory members, but they shall not have a vote. The same privilege shall be accorded to every minister and elder of the Reformed Church who, though not a delegate, is present at a meeting of a judicatory. Ministers from other denominations who are in attendance shall be recognized and welcomed by the President, but shall not be admitted to seats as advisory members.

ART. 62. A member of a judicatory shall not be allowed to enter a protest against its acts; but any member dissenting shall have the right to call for the yeas and



nays, in which case the vote and name of every member voting on the question shall be entered on the minutes.

## SECTION 2.

### **The Consistory.**

ART. 63. The Consistory is composed of the pastor or pastors and the elders and deacons, and has oversight and government of the congregation and of all its organizations.

ART. 64. The pastor shall be President of the Consistory, unless the existing charter provides otherwise. When a charge is without a pastor, or the pastor is unable to attend, one of the elders shall be chosen to preside. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise provided in the charter or constitution of the congregation.

ART. 65. The Joint Consistory, as provided in Article 13 of this Constitution, is composed of the members of the Consistories included in the charge. It has jurisdiction over the common interests of the congregations represented, such as the calling of a pastor, the provision for his salary, and the erection and maintenance of a parsonage for the charge. The pastor shall be President; in the event of his absence or

inability to preside, one of the elders shall be chosen to preside.

ART. 66. The Consistory shall hold stated monthly or quarterly meetings, and may hold such special meetings as are called by the President, or, in the event of his absence, or inability or unwillingness to act, by the Secretary when requested in writing to do so by a majority of the members. Previous notice of special meetings of the Consistory or of the Joint Consistory shall be given to all its members.

ART. 67. The Consistory or the Joint Consistory shall annually elect delegates, a *primarius* and a *secundus*, to represent the charge in Classis, who shall also be the delegates to Synod whenever Synod meets in general convention. At least ten days before the annual meeting of the judicatory to which these delegates have been elected, their credentials shall be sent to its Stated Clerk by the President or the Secretary of the Consistory.

ART. 68. In managing the general affairs of the congregation the Consistory shall call congregational meetings, order collections for the apportionments of Classis and for other benevolent purposes, distribute alms through the deacons, provide for the audit of the treasurer's account, and make due provision for the support of the

pastor. It shall keep a full and accurate record of its own proceedings, be the custodian of all congregational records, and submit any or all records to the Classis when occasion requires it and the Classis requests it.

ART. 69. In calling a minister and in all matters of a general nature, as specified in Article 12 of this Constitution, the Consistory shall determine nothing conclusively without the consent of a majority of those members of the congregation present at a meeting duly called for the purpose, of which at least two weeks' public notice shall be given.

ART. 70. When a charge is without a pastor the Consistory or the Joint Consistory shall provide for the temporary supply of the pulpit, in which case Classis shall have only advisory rights; provided, however, that such temporary supply shall not continue longer than one year, and that the supply shall not be any one but a minister, a licentiate, or a student for the ministry, of the Reformed Church in the United States, in good and regular standing. The Consistory or the Joint Consistory shall as soon as possible present to the congregation or congregations constituting the charge the name of one candidate for the pastorate, to be voted upon at a meeting called for the purpose, of which public no-

tice shall be given at least two weeks previously. The communicant members shall vote by ballot for or against the candidate. He is elected if a majority of the members of the charge present and voting cast their vote in his favor, unless a larger proportion is required by the charter. The Consistory or Joint Consistory shall then tender him a call according to the form prescribed by the General Synod. If a pastoral charge consists of two or more congregations, the election shall, if possible, be held in each congregation on the same day. In no circumstances shall a congregation or charge vote on more than one candidate at one and the same meeting.

ART. 71. Since only ministers and licentiates are eligible to the pastoral office, a congregation or charge shall not nominate or elect a student for the ministry as its pastor.

### SECTION 3.

#### **The Spiritual Council.**

ART. 72. The Spiritual Council consists of the pastor or pastors and the acting elders of a congregation. It has original jurisdiction in matters of discipline except in the case of a Minister of the Word.

ART. 73. The pastor shall be President

of the Spiritual Council; if the congregation is without a pastor, one of the elders shall be chosen to preside. A majority of its members shall constitute a quorum.

ART. 74. It is the duty of the Spiritual Council to watch over the members of the congregation, to guard the doctrine of Christ, and to maintain wholesome discipline. It alone has power to admit members to full communion and to exclude any who may err from the faith or offend in morals.

ART. 75. Stated meetings of the Spiritual Council shall be held for the examination of the catechumens applying for confirmation, and before every communion service. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the President or at the request of two elders.

ART. 76. The Spiritual Council shall upon proper request furnish members of the congregation, in good and regular standing, with certificates of dismissal to another congregation in the Reformed Church or to any orthodox Protestant Church which receives members by certificate from the Reformed Church in the United States. The certificate shall specify the congregation to which the person is dismissed.

ART. 77. If the Spiritual Council after being duly notified neglects to convene at the time appointed, the pastor may sit alone to try an individual and on finding him guilty may pronounce sentence. The proceedings in such a case shall be recorded in the minutes of the Spiritual Council.

ART. 78. The Spiritual Council shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the Classis when occasion requires it and the Classis requests it.

#### SECTION 4.

##### **The Classis.**

ART. 79. A Classis consists of the ministers residing within a district designated by the Synod and of the elders delegated by the pastoral charges situated within these limits, and has jurisdiction over said ministers and pastoral charges.

ART. 80. A Classis shall embrace at least three pastoral charges and as many ordained ministers. It shall meet annually at such time and place as it may designate. Three ministers and two delegated elders regularly convened shall constitute a quorum.

ART. 81. Each pastoral charge shall be represented in Classis by its pastor or pas-

tors and one delegated elder; or, if the charge is without a pastor, by a delegated elder.

ART. 82. The annual meeting of a Classis shall be opened with religious services, including the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by one of its members designated by him or by the Classis, after which the roll shall be called; if a quorum is present, the officers for the ensuing year shall be elected, and the business shall proceed according to the Rules of Order prescribed by the General Synod.

ART. 83. The President shall perform all the duties of his office as defined by the Rules of Order. Immediately after the election of officers, he shall define the Bar of the House, and appoint the Standing Committees of Classis, which shall present their reports as soon as possible. The reports of the Committees on Minutes of Classis, on Minutes of Synod, and on Overtures shall exhibit those items which claim the attention of the Classis.

ART. 84. At the annual meeting every pastor shall present a written parochial and a full statistical report, and every minister, though without a charge, a report of his labors. If unable to be present, he shall forward his report to the Stated Clerk three

days before the meeting. The parochial report shall contain a full account of the spiritual and temporal condition of the charge and of the labors of the pastor. After the reception of the parochial reports the President or any member of Classis shall ask the pastor and the elder such questions as may be requisite to elicit additional information. The following questions shall be addressed by the President to each elder :

1st. Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God and the standard of our Church?

2nd. Are the catechising of the children, the instruction of the youth and the introduction of members into the Church faithfully attended to in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States?

3rd. Is family visitation faithfully performed by the pastor?

4th. Is the duty to be observed before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, relating to the fitness of the communicants, as prescribed in Article 200 of the Constitution of our Church, carefully attended to?

5th. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge?

The statistical report shall be prepared according to the form approved by the General Synod. If a charge is without a pastor, this report shall be furnished by the



Consistory. On the basis of all these parochial and statistical reports the Committee on the State of Religion shall prepare a general report for Classis.

ART. 85. In every Classis is vested the power to examine and license applicants for the ministry, to ordain licentiates, to constitute or dissolve pastoral relations, to receive and dismiss ministers and licentiates, to depose or otherwise discipline, according to his desert, a member of its own body, and to reinstate a minister whom it has suspended or deposed, when trustworthy evidence of repentance and reformation appears.

ART. 86. Classis shall have access to all congregational records, according to the provisions of Articles 68 and 78 of this Constitution, and shall hear and decide all cases of reference, complaint and appeal, as well as all questions respecting ministers or their congregations which may arise within its jurisdiction and are regularly brought before it, such as organizing new congregations, determining boundaries of congregations and charges, deciding controversies between congregations or charges, forming, reconstructing, or dissolving charges, as may be requested or as Classis may deem expedient. Classis, however, shall exercise its right of dividing or reconstructing a

charge or charges only after having counseled with the Consistories or Joint Consistories of the charges involved, and such action shall require a two-thirds vote of the Classis.

ART. 87. An ordained minister or a licentiate shall not be received by Classis until he has presented a regular certificate of dismissal from the Classis to which he belongs. The reception of a minister from another denomination shall not be final until it is confirmed by Synod.

ART. 88. An ordained minister or a licentiate shall be amenable to the Classis that dismissed him and his name shall be retained on its roll until he shall have been received by the Classis to which he has been dismissed. The dismissal of an ordained minister at once annuls any previous appointment or election of him, by Classis, as a member of a committee, or as a delegate to Synod or to the General Synod.

ART. 89. A Classis dismissing an ordained minister or a licentiate shall specify in its minutes the particular Classis and Synod or other denomination to which he is dismissed; and in receiving a minister or a licentiate, it shall in like manner specify the particular Classis and Synod or other denomination from which he has been received. A certificate of dismissal shall be valid for only one year from its date.

ART. 90. A Classis shall not refuse to receive an ordained minister or a licentiate dismissed to it by another Classis unless there are manifest grounds of objection against his doctrine or morals, in which case the certificate of dismissal shall be returned to the Classis, with a specific statement of the grounds of objection; whereupon, the Classis shall take these objections into consideration, and if it finds no sufficient reason to change its action the whole question shall be referred to Synod for decision. When an ordained minister or a licentiate is received by any Classis, it shall at once give official notice of his reception to the Classis that dismissed him.

ART. 91. Whenever a minister or a licentiate wilfully neglects for three consecutive years to attend the annual meetings of his Classis and fails to report to it, he renders himself liable to suspension from office; and Classis shall at once cite him for trial and proceed in his case according to the Constitution of the Church.

ART. 92. Every Classis at its first annual meeting after the minutes of the General Synod have been distributed shall take action on all ordinances and constitutional amendments approved by the General Synod and sent down to the Classes for adoption or rejection, and shall report its

action to the next stated meeting of its Synod and of the General Synod.

ART. 93. A special meeting of Classis may be called at any time by the President; and at the written request of two ministers and two delegate elders of Classis, specifying the particular business to be transacted, he shall call such a meeting. The party or parties for whose benefit it is called shall pay the expenses incurred. At least two weeks before the time of such meeting the Stated Clerk shall notify the members by circular of the time and place of meeting, and of the items of business that will claim attention. In case of the death or removal of the President, or if the business to be transacted implicates him, the power of calling the meeting is vested in the Stated Clerk. If either of these contingencies should exist with respect to the Stated Clerk also, two ministers and two elders, members of the Classis, may call the meeting.

ART. 94. A Classis at any annual meeting may appoint its President, Stated Clerk and one other of its members an Executive Committee, of which the President shall be chairman. This Committee shall represent Classis during the interval between meetings; and in all cases when between the parties concerned there is no question at issue, and in which at least two weeks' notice of

the proposed action has been given in writing by the President to every member of Classis and written objection to said action has not been made to any member of the committee nor a special meeting of Classis demanded, the Committee shall have power to dissolve a pastoral relation, to dismiss or receive a minister or a licentiate, to confirm a call, to appoint a committee to ordain a licentiate and install a pastor, to permit a minister or a licentiate to minister as a regular supply of vacant congregations, and to authorize the organization of new congregations. It shall also be the duty of this committee to advise with the Consistory of a vacant charge, and, if requested, to aid the Consistory in securing a pastor, and to aid a minister in obtaining a suitable field of labor. This committee shall also serve as advisors when called on by pastors, Consistories, or portions of Consistories to aid in the amicable adjustment of disputes in the administration of the affairs of the congregations or charges. The committee shall at the close of the year present a full report of its acts and proceedings to Classis for revision and incorporation in its minutes. Classis shall pay the necessary expenses of this committee.

ART. 95. The Stated Clerk shall have charge of the books and papers of Classis,

and shall issue all its official documents, signed by himself and the President, with the seal of Classis affixed. At least ten days before the annual meeting of Classis he shall furnish every pastor with a copy of the blank form of the statistical report. He shall transmit to Synod at its annual meeting a certified copy of the minutes of all the meetings of Classis held during the year, in the form and order required by the rules of Synod. He shall furnish pastoral charges and individuals with a certified copy of any proceedings in which they are specially concerned. If Synod meets as a delegated body, he shall before its annual meeting furnish its Stated Clerk with credentials of the delegates, *primarii* and *secundi*, elected to represent Classis. He shall also before the stated meeting of the General Synod furnish its Stated Clerk with the credentials of the delegates, *primarii* and *secundi*, elected to represent Classis, together with the roll of its actual members, and also with a certified copy of those portions of the minutes of Classis claiming the attention of the General Synod.

ART. 96. On the dissolution of a Classis the Synod with which it was connected shall have jurisdiction over its members and congregations, and shall transfer them to another Classis or other Classes. It shall

have charge and control of the property of said dissolved Classis, if such charge and control does not conflict with the civil law, and shall determine any case of discipline begun by the Classis and not concluded.

ART. 97. The Classes, through their respective Stated Clerks, shall make report at least annually to the Stated Clerk of the General Synod of all licensures; ordinations, suspensions, depositions, dismissions, or erasures of names of ministers, together with the time and place; and in the case of the decease of a licentiate or a minister, his name and the time and place of decease.

## SECTION 5.

### **The Synod.**

ART. 98. A Synod is composed of four or more adjacent Classes designated by the General Synod, which has jurisdiction over them. It shall meet annually, either in general convention or as a delegated body. In general convention it consists of all its ministers and of one elder from each pastoral charge; as a delegated body it consists of the ministers and elders chosen by its Classes according to a basis of representation adopted by itself with the concurrence of at least two-thirds of its Classes. A suspended minister shall not be counted in

the basis of representation either to Synod or to the General Synod.

ART. 99. Any number of members convened at the time and place appointed for a meeting, in which a majority of the Classes is represented, shall constitute a quorum, which quorum shall contain not fewer than one minister and one elder from each of the Classes necessary to a majority of the Classes.

ART. 100. The annual sessions shall be opened with religious services, including the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by some other member designated by him or by the Synod, after which the organization shall be effected and the business shall proceed according to the Rules of Order prescribed by the General Synod.

ART. 101. A Synod shall annually review the proceedings of its Classes. The report of the Committee on this subject shall embrace the following topics:

1. Things censurable, as a violation of the Constitution of the Church, or an offense against propriety, or a neglect of duty.

2. Requests and references from the Classes to the Synod.

3. Complaints and appeals to the Synod.

4. Decisions of the Classes on subjects referred to them by the Synod.

5. Licensures; ordinations; ordained ministers received, dismissed, deceased, suspended or de-



posed; licentiates received or dismissed, and licenses revoked.

6. Time and place of next annual meeting of each Classis, with the names and postoffice addresses of its President, Stated Clerk and Treasurer.

ART. 102. The actions of the Classes upon an ordinance or an amendment of the Constitution of the Church shall be incorporated in regular order in the minutes of the Synod, and shall appear in the printed copy of them, for the information of the General Synod.

ART. 103. A Synod has power to hear and determine complaints and appeals, to give advice in a case referred to it by a Classis, to establish new Classes within its own limits, and to determine all controversies between Classes and between ministers or congregations of different Classes. A Classis, however, cannot be dissolved, nor can any part of it be united with another Classis, without its own consent.

ART. 104. A Synod, either separately or in connection with one or more adjacent Synods, may establish and maintain colleges and other literary institutions, and shall have control over them.

ART. 105. A Synod, or two or more adjacent Synods, may with the consent of the General Synod establish a Theological Seminary. The Board of Trustees and the

Board of Visitors of such Seminary shall be elected by said Synod or Synods, and shall report to them annually. A Theological Seminary shall not hereafter be established except by a Synod or Synods. The Teachers of Theology and other officers shall be amenable only to the Synod or Synods by which they are elected and supported, subject to charter regulations.

ART. 106. Each Synod shall give necessary attention to the education of pious young men for the gospel ministry, and to the cause of missions both in the home and in the foreign field. Its missionary operations shall be under the authority and control of the General Synod.

ART. 107. A Synod, either separately or in connection with one or more Synods, may establish and maintain a Board of Publication, whose particular purpose shall be the publication and sale of such church papers and books as are adapted to promote sound knowledge and true religion. At every annual meeting of the Synod or Synods, the Board shall submit for examination and review a full statement of its operations during the year and of its present condition.

ART. 108. A special meeting of Synod shall be called by the President, or, in case

of his death or removal, by the Stated Clerk, whenever six ministers and four elders, members of the Synod, request it in a written communication specifying the particular business to be transacted. At least three weeks before the Synod convenes the Stated Clerk shall notify the members by circular of the time and place of meeting, and of the items of business that will claim attention.

ART. 109. All credentials, calls to Teachers of Theology and agreements to which Synod is a party, shall be signed by the President and the Stated Clerk, and shall have the seal of Synod attached. The Stated Clerk shall attest all extracts from the records of Synod, and shall have charge of all the records and papers, and of the seal of Synod, and shall submit to the General Synod at its stated meeting three or more duly authenticated printed copies of the proceedings of every meeting held since the preceding stated meeting of that body.

## SECTION 6.

### **The General Synod.**

ART. 110. The General Synod represents the whole Church, and is composed of ministers and elders delegated by the Classes. It is the highest judicatory and the last resort in all cases respecting the government of the Church not finally adju-

dedicated by the Synods. Its title shall be:  
THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED  
CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

ART. III. In the General Synod a Classis consisting of not more than ten ministers shall be represented by one minister and one elder; a Classis of more than ten and not more than twenty, by two ministers and two elders, and so on in the same ratio. Any number of delegates representing a majority of the Classes shall constitute a quorum, when convened at the time and place appointed for a meeting. At least one-third of the delegates shall be elders.

ART. II2. The General Synod shall meet triennially at the time and place appointed. The sessions shall be opened with religious services, including the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by some member designated by him or by the General Synod, after which the organization shall be effected and the business shall proceed according to the Rules of Order.

ART. II3. A special meeting of the General Synod shall be called by the President, or in case of his death by the Stated Clerk, whenever fourteen ministers and seven elders, representing a majority of the Synods, present a written request specifying the particular business to be transacted.

At least six weeks before the time of meeting the Stated Clerk shall issue a circular to the members, informing them of the time and place of meeting, and specifying the items of business to be considered.

ART. 114. The General Synod shall review the proceedings of the Synods and approve or disapprove their acts, and shall receive and act upon those portions of the minutes of Classes submitted to it. It has power to maintain correspondence with sister Churches, to hear and determine complaints and appeals, to decide controversies between Synods and between Classes of different Synods, and also to give counsel in cases referred to it by one or more Synods. It may, at the request of four adjacent Classes and with the consent of the Synod or Synods within whose bounds they lie, constitute them a Synod.

ART. 115. The General Synod shall diligently prosecute the work of Home Missions and of Foreign Missions, of Orphans' Homes, and the general Sunday-school work of the Church by Boards, which are to be elected and governed in their proceedings in accordance with the provisions of their respective charters. At every triennial meeting of the General Synod each Board shall submit for revision a report of its operations during the previous three

years and a statement of its present condition.

ART. 116. The General Synod may appoint a standing committee on Young People's Societies, through which committee the work of such societies may be brought to its attention.

ART. 117. The General Synod shall devise and maintain an efficient plan for the support of aged and infirm ministers who are without adequate means of self-support and are recommended for aid by the Classis to which they belong. The plan shall also include the needy widows of ministers.

ART. 118. The General Synod shall prepare the following forms: constitution for a congregation; constitution for a joint consistory; certificate of licensure; testimonial of ordination; certificate of dismissal of a minister; call to a minister; call to a teacher of theology; certificate of dismissal of a church member; statistical report of a pastoral charge; statistical report of a classis; statistical report of a synod; church register; accusations; citation of an accused person; citation of a witness; form for qualifying a witness; order of business and rules of order for the classes, the synods and the General Synod. These forms may be changed or

amended at any stated meeting of the General Synod by a two-thirds vote.

ART. 119. All proposed ordinances of the Church, such as a constitution, a catechism, a hymn book and a liturgy, as well as all amendments of ordinances, must first be approved by a two-thirds vote of the General Synod at a stated meeting, and then be submitted to all the Classes for adoption or rejection. If at the next stated meeting of the General Synod it shall appear that more than one-third of the Classes have rejected the ordinance or amendment, the same is rejected and shall be so declared by the General Synod; otherwise it shall be declared adopted and be binding on the whole Church.

ART. 120. The original records of all proceedings of the General Synod and all documents, letters and papers having reference to its proceedings, shall be carefully preserved by the Stated Clerk and deposited in such place as the General Synod shall direct; and a document or paper shall not be removed by any person whatever without permission obtained from the General Synod, or, during its recess, from the Stated Clerk.

ART. 121. At least forty days before the regular meeting of the General Synod, its Stated Clerk shall furnish the Stated Clerks

of the several Classes with the blank forms of the credentials for delegates to the General Synod.

ART. 122. The Stated Clerk of the General Synod shall provide and accurately keep a Register of Licensures and Ordinations of ministers throughout the Church, said Register showing the full name of the licentiate or ordained minister, with the date of licensure or ordination, or both, the name of the Classis by which the minister was licensed or ordained, and the time and place of licensure or ordination, the time and place of the minister's decease, with sufficient space for memoranda of the facts in case of the dismissal of the minister to another Church, or of erasure of his name in the case of a transfer of his church relationship without dismissal, or in case of his suspension or deposition from the ministry. The Register shall have an alphabetical index.

## PART III.

### DISCIPLINE.

#### SECTION I.

##### **Discipline in General.**

ART. 123. Christian discipline is the exercise of that authority and the application of those laws which the Lord Jesus Christ



has established in His Church, to preserve its purity and honor, and to promote the spiritual welfare of its members.

ART. 124. An offense is anything in the doctrine, principles, or practice of a church member, officer, or judicatory that is contrary to the Word of God; and nothing shall be admitted as matter of accusation or considered an offense which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Scriptures or to the regulations of the Church founded on them. The following sins especially merit discipline: heresy, schism, blasphemy, adultery, fornication, lascivious wantonness, theft, fraud, perjury, lying, contentiousness, intemperance, profanation of the Lord's Day, impudent scoffing, cruelty, and other violations of the Ten Commandments.

ART. 125. Discipline shall be exercised in the form of admonition, censure, erasure of name, suspension, deposition and excommunication.

ART. 126. Should any of the lower judicatories pass an action of censure or reproof upon an individual or any party in the Church in their unavoidable absence, the Secretary or Stated Clerk of said judicatory shall give those concerned immediate notice of such action; and should they feel aggrieved by it, they shall have ten days time from date of notice for giving notice

of appeal to the officers of said judicatory, and ten days further time for lodging their reasons for appeal.

ART. 127. Every case in which there is a charge of offense against a church member or officer shall be known, in its original and appellate stages, as a judicial case. Every other case shall be known as a non-judicial or administrative case.

## SECTION 2.

### **Members — Unconfirmed and Confirmed.**

ART. 128. All members of the Church are subject to its government and discipline. If the unconfirmed fall into sinful ways, the pastor and elders shall remind the parents or sponsors of their duty in regard to them, and shall also seek by direct approach to bring them to the obedience of Christ.

ART. 129. Members of the Church who upon being convicted of an offense reject the admonition of the Spiritual Council or the judicatory that found them guilty, or who have committed an act of public scandal, shall be suspended from the communion of the Church. Those thus suspended shall be treated not as enemies, but as erring brethren, and shall be admonished as such, in accordance with apostolic direction (2

Thess. 3:6-15). But if this suspension and these admonitions are ineffectual, offenders shall be excommunicated (Matt. 18:17). A suspension may or may not be announced publicly, at the discretion of the church judicatory that tried the case; a sentence of excommunication, however, shall always be publicly pronounced.

ART. 130. If a member shall neglect to partake of the Holy Communion, or refuse to contribute to the support of the Church, or continuously absent himself from the public worship for a period of one year, such conduct shall be regarded as an offense against the Church, and he shall be admonished by the pastor or elders. If after admonition he continues in such neglect of duty for another year, the Spiritual Council shall notify him that he is no longer in good and regular standing. If before the expiration of another year he shall express a desire to be reinstated and shall promise to attend to his duties, the Spiritual Council shall reinstate him. If at the end of the third year he shall not express a desire for reinstatement, or if any member shall unite with another congregation or denomination without a certificate of dismissal, the Spiritual Council in either case shall erase his name from the church register.

## SECTION 3.

### **Ministers, Elders and Deacons.**

ART. 131. If a minister, an elder, or a deacon shall commit an offense that brings dishonor upon the Church or is punishable in the criminal courts, he shall upon trial and conviction by a church judicatory be removed from his office; if an elder or a deacon, by the Spiritual Council; if a minister, by his Classis. In case a minister is involved in a grave public scandal, the Spiritual Council shall temporarily prevent him from exercising his ministerial functions and refer him at once to his Classis for trial.

ART. 132. If an ill report concerning the moral conduct of a minister, an elder, or a deacon is in circulation, the Spiritual Council shall institute an immediate investigation, and proceed as the interests of religion and as justice to the individual may require. If the Spiritual Council neglects to investigate ill reports concerning a minister, the Classis shall investigate them without waiting to be requested by the Spiritual Council. But if the Classis discovers that the Spiritual Council is already occupied with the case, it shall for a reasonable time await the result of the inquiry. A prosecution based on evil rumors shall

not be instituted unless there is a specification of some particular sin or sins and the rumors are generally circulated, permanent and not transient, and accompanied with strong presumption of truth.

ART. 133. If a pastor shall have been suspended or deposed from his ministerial office, the relation previously existing between him and his pastoral charge shall be dissolved and the charge declared vacant.

ART. 134. If a minister accused of an offense shall refuse to appear, either in person or by counsel, after having been cited twice, he shall for his contumacy be suspended from his office; and if after another citation he refuses to appear, either in person or by counsel, he shall be suspended from the communion of the Church, if the alleged offense warrants such suspension.

ART. 135. An accusation in case of scandal shall not be heard unless presented within one year after the crime is alleged to have been committed, except it can be shown that insurmountable difficulties existed, which prevented the presentation of the accusation within that time.

#### SECTION 4.

##### **Parties in Cases of Process.**

ART. 136. Judicial proceedings against

alleged offenders shall be instituted only on accusation of a communicant member or by a judicatory finding it necessary to investigate an offense.

ART. 137. When an individual brings an accusation, he shall be named as the accuser; and when an accusation is brought by a judicatory of the Church, "The Reformed Church in the United States" shall be named as the accuser. The person or persons against whom the accusation is brought shall be named as the accused.

ART. 138. When an accusation has been brought by a judicatory, it shall appoint a committee of one or more of its members to conduct the proceeding in all its stages until its final issue is reached; but the judicatory which appointed the committee may change it, and may also appoint assistant counsel in the case at any stage of the proceeding, the same privilege either of engaging other counsel or of engaging assistant counsel being accorded to the accused.

ART. 139. In cases of alleged personal injuries, a proceeding shall not be allowed unless those means for reconciliation have been tried and have failed which are required by our Lord (Matt. 18: 15-17).

## SECTION 5.

### **Charges and Specifications.**

ART. 140. The charge or charges shall be in writing and shall set forth the alleged offense, and the specifications shall set forth the facts relied upon to sustain the charge or charges. Each offense shall be set forth as a separate charge; and each specification shall declare, as far as possible, the time, place and circumstances of the offense, and shall be accompanied with the names of the witnesses.

## SECTION 6.

### **Process and Trial.**

ART. 141. When charges are made that an offense has been committed, they must be filed in duplicate with the Stated Clerk or Secretary of the judicatory to which they are directed, one copy to be for the use of the accuser and the other copy for the use of the accused. The Stated Clerk or Secretary shall immediately inform the President of the judicatory of the filing of the charges or accusations.

ART. 142. If the charges are made against the Stated Clerk or Secretary of the judicatory, they shall be filed with the presiding officer, and he shall proceed to per-

form the duties of the Stated Clerk or Secretary in the matter until another Stated Clerk or Secretary shall have been appointed for the occasion; and if they are made against the presiding officer, the Secretary or Stated Clerk shall proceed to perform the duties of the presiding officer in the matter until the judicatory can meet and appoint a presiding officer for the occasion.

ART. 143. The President of the judicatory in which the charges have been filed, or in case of his disqualification the Stated Clerk or Secretary, shall call a meeting for the hearing of the case, in the manner and form in which such judicatory is usually called for the transaction of business. The Secretary or Stated Clerk, or in case of his disqualification the President, shall issue a citation according to the form prescribed by the General Synod. Such citation and one of the copies of the charges, with the names of the witnesses, shall be served on the accused at least ten days before the trial, in person if possible, otherwise either by leaving them at his last known place of residence with an adult member of his family or household, or by mailing them in a registered letter. The accuser also shall be notified of the time and place of the trial by the Stated Clerk or Secretary, or in case of his disqualifica-



tion by the President, at least ten days previous to the trial.

ART. 144. If the accused refuses to obey the citation, he shall be cited a second time to appear at such time as the judicatory may deem reasonable, but not within less than ten days. If he still refuses to appear, not only shall he be liable to censure for contumacy, but the judicatory may proceed with the investigation and decision of the case as if he were present, in which case the judicatory shall appoint some person or persons to represent him as counsel.

ART. 145. The President, or the Stated Clerk or Secretary of the judicatory which is to hear a case shall, when requested, issue citation to the witness or witnesses according to the form prescribed by the General Synod.

Such citation shall be served upon each witness in like manner as provided in Article 143 for service of citation upon the accused. A person disobeying a citation thus issued and served is guilty of disobedience and contempt, and may for such offense be suspended (if a member of the Church) from the rights and privileges of the Church, or be reprimanded by the judicatory.

ART. 146. The testimony of witnesses

who, on account of distance, ill health, or other unavoidable circumstances, cannot appear at the trial of a case, may be taken by either party before a notary public or a justice of the peace, or before a member of the Church designated as a commissioner by the judicatory, provided the party in whose interest the testimony is taken notifies the opposite party, at least ten days previously, when and where the testimony is to be given, and what it is expected to prove. The opposite party may be present and cross-examine the witness, or may send questions for such cross-examination. The testimony thus taken may be read at any and all stages of the trial, provided the notary or justice or commissioner has certified thereto that said witnesses were duly qualified, and that the testimony is their testimony and was reduced to writing by him and was taken at the time and place specified in the notice.

ART. 147. Trials shall be conducted in open or secret session, as the majority of the judicatory may determine.

ART. 148. An accuser may be represented by counsel, but only ministers and elders of the Reformed Church in the United States, in good and regular standing, shall appear as counsel in a judicatory.

ART. 149. Exceptions to the jurisdic-

tion of the judicatory, to the regularity of its organization, to the sufficiency of the charges and specifications, must be made at the meeting named in the citations, either before or after the charges are made. The judicatory shall determine all such preliminary objections, and may dismiss the case, or, in the furtherance of justice, may permit amendments to the specifications or charges which do not change their nature.

ART. 150. If the proceedings are found in order and the charges and specifications are considered sufficient to put the accused on his defense, and there is not an acknowledgment of guilt, the trial shall proceed; but if the guilt is acknowledged, the judicatory shall pronounce sentence without further process of trial.

ART. 151. The witnesses, after being sworn or affirmed by the President or by any member of the body whom he shall appoint, shall be examined, and, if desired, cross-examined; and other competent evidence may be presented. Questions as to order or evidence shall be decided by the President, subject to exception by either of the parties at the time the decision is rendered; and such decisions, if it is desired by either party, shall be entered upon the records of the case.

ART. 152. All persons, including the accuser and the accused, are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God or in a future state of reward and punishment, or have not sufficient intelligence to understand the obligation of an oath. Any witness may be challenged for incompetency, and the judicatory shall decide the question.

ART. 153. A member of the judicatory may be one of the witnesses in a case which comes before it. He shall be qualified as other witnesses are, and after having given his testimony may immediately resume his seat as a member of the judicatory, but shall not have a vote in the case in any of the judicatories of the Church.

ART. 154. Exceptions to any of the rulings or proceedings in the trial may be taken by either of the parties, and shall be entered on the record to be available in case of an appeal.

ART. 155. The charge or charges and specifications and the decision of the judicatory and the notice of appeal, if any, shall be entered on the minutes of the judicatory, all of which, together with the evidence in the case duly filed and authenticated by the clerk of the judicatory, shall constitute the record of the case. If demanded, copies of the record shall be promptly furnished to

the parties at their expense. The fees charged shall not exceed five cents for each one hundred words, including certificate of correctness attached to the copy.

ART. 156. Decisions in judicial proceedings must be rendered by a majority vote of the members of the judicatory present during the entire progress of the trial. A separate vote must be taken on each charge. A sentence, however, of excommunication of a member, or of suspension or deposition of a minister, elder, or deacon from office, shall not be valid except by concurrence of two-thirds of the members voting. The decision and the sentence shall be publicly pronounced by the President in the judicatory at the conclusion of the proceedings. Motion for a new trial or for a mitigation of sentence shall be heard and decided immediately after the conclusion of the trial. Decisions, sentence, exceptions, motions and further proceedings on them, and notice of appeal shall be duly recorded in the minutes of the trial in the order in which they occur.

## SECTION 7.

### References.

ART. 157. A reference is a submission of a pending matter by a lower to the next higher judicatory, and may be made either

for advice or for ultimate decision by such higher judicatory.

ART. 158. In matters of reference members of the lower judicatory may vote in the higher judicatory.

ART. 159. A judicatory may refuse to give final judgment in a matter of reference, and may remit the whole case either with or without advice to the lower judicatory.

ART. 160. In all cases of reference the record of the proceedings in the lower judicatory shall be transmitted to the higher judicatory, and the judicatory to which a reference is made shall determine the method of procedure to be adopted for hearing and disposing of such reference.

## SECTION 8.

### **Complaints.**

ART. 161. A complaint is a written representation made for grievances other than those that necessitate an accusation and a judicial trial. Any member of the Church in good and regular standing shall have the right of complaint, provided that due notice is given to the party against whom complaint is made.

ART. 162. If the constitutional require-

ments for the regularity of a complaint shall have been met, the judicatory to which the complaint has been made shall declare it in order; and all complaints shall be so disposed of by the judicatory to which they are made that a just, correct and intelligent conclusion may be reached.

ART. 163. If the official act or decision of an officer of the Church is the ground of complaint, the complaint shall be brought before the judicatory in whose name or by whose authority he acted. Duplicate copies of the complaint shall be lodged by the complainant with the Stated Clerk or Secretary of the judicatory, one of which copies shall be served by the Stated Clerk or Secretary on the officer complained against at least ten days before the complaint is heard.

ART. 164. If the official decision of a church judicatory is complained of, the complaint shall be brought before the next higher judicatory. Immediate notice of complaint shall be given, and shall be recorded by the Stated Clerk or Secretary, and the President shall at once appoint a committee to defend the action of the judicatory before the next higher tribunal. Duplicate copies of the complaint and of the reasons for it must be filed by the complainant with the Stated Clerk or Sec-

retary of the body complained of within thirty days after the final adjournment of the body. If reasons of complaint shall have been filed with the Stated Clerk or Secretary within the prescribed time, he shall at once inform the chairman of the committee appointed to defend the judicatory, and furnish him with one of the duplicate copies of the complaint and the reasons for it. Notice of complaint, together with the complaint and the reasons for it, filed with the Stated Clerk or Secretary, shall be certified by him to the next higher tribunal, before which at its next session such complaint shall be heard.

ART. 165. Neither the complainant, nor the persons complained of, nor the members of the judicatory complained of shall vote in the case in any of the judicatories of the Church.

ART. 166. Either of the parties to a complaint may complain to the next higher judicatory.

ART. 167. The judicatory against which a complaint is made shall send up its records to the higher judicatory, together with all papers relating to the matter of the complaint.

ART. 168. The same method of procedure in the hearing of a complaint shall



prevail as in case of an appeal, as provided in Articles 179 and 180 of this Constitution.

ART. 169. The effect of a complaint, if sustained, may be the reversal in whole or in part of the action or decision complained of. When a complaint is sustained, the lower judicatory shall be directed how to dispose of the matter.

ART. 170. Whenever a complaint is entered against a decision of a judicatory by at least one-third of the members recorded as present when the decision was made, the execution of the decision shall be stayed until the final issue of the case in a higher judicatory.

## SECTION 9.

### **Appeals.**

ART. 171. An appeal is the removal of a judicial case by a written representation from a lower to a higher judicatory, and may be taken by either of the original parties from the judgment of the lower judicatory.

ART. 172. If an appeal is taken from the decision of a judicatory in a judicial case, the judicatory that rendered the decision shall defend its position in the higher judicatory by and through such represen-

tatives as it may deem proper to appoint; said representatives, however, shall be ministers or elders, or both, of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ART. 173. Irregularities in the proceedings; refusal to entertain an appeal; refusal of reasonable indulgence to a party on trial; receiving improper, or declining to receive important testimony; undue haste; manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of a case; mistake or injustice in the decision, or in any of the rulings of the judicatory in the matters appertaining to the case; undue severity of sentence—are good and sufficient reasons for an appeal.

ART. 174. Written notice of appeal, with duplicate copies of specifications of errors alleged, shall be given, within thirty days after the adjournment of the judicatory, to the Stated Clerk or Secretary of the judicatory appealed from, and in case of his absence or disability or death, to the President of it, who shall file it, with the records and all papers appertaining to the case, or a certified copy of them, with the Stated Clerk of the higher judicatory, on or before the second day of its regular meeting next ensuing the date of the reception of said notice, and shall furnish the chairman of the committee appointed to defend the judicatory with one of the du-

plicate copies of specifications of errors alleged.

ART. 175. The appellant shall appear, in person or by counsel, before the judicatory appealed to, at or before the close of the second day's session of its stated meeting, next ensuing the date of the filing of the notice of appeal, prepared to proceed with the appeal. If the appellant does not appear before the judicatory appealed to, and fails to show, to the satisfaction of the judicatory, that said appellant was unavoidably prevented from so doing, the appeal shall be considered abandoned, and the judgment of the lower judicatory shall stand. The judicatory appealed to shall proceed to hear an appeal whether the judicatory appealed from appears or not, unless it is shown that notice of appeal was not properly served on the judicatory appealed from.

ART. 176. All cases of appeal of which the records and papers, or certified copies of them, have been placed in the hands of the Stated Clerk of the judicatory appealed to, shall be called up by him as soon as possible after the permanent organization of the judicatory; he shall state the names of the original parties, read the accusation and the decision and sentence, state the name of the judicatory appealed from and

the names of the appellants, and read the reasons filed for the appeal.

ART. 177. In case the Stated Clerk or Secretary of the lower judicatory has failed to file the records of an appeal as provided in Article 174, he shall be referred to his judicatory to be dealt with as the case may require; and the appellant or the judicatory appealed from may furnish a copy of said records, and, provided both shall agree as to its correctness, the same shall be taken as if it had been filed by the Stated Clerk or Secretary.

ART. 178. Testimony that has not been brought before the lower judicatory shall not be admitted in the higher, except by consent of both parties. If new evidence arises which is likely to alter the aspect of the case materially, the case must be sent back to the lower judicatory for a new investigation.

ART. 179. After an appeal shall have been called up and stated by the clerk, the presiding officer shall appoint a committee whose duty it shall be to take charge of all the records and papers in the case, examine the same thoroughly, and report on them:

1. Whether or not the appeal is regular and ready for hearing.
2. Propose to the judicatory the day and the hour the appeal shall be heard.

3. The time to be granted each party to present the case.

ART. 180. When the time appointed for the hearing of an appeal arrives, it shall have precedence over all other business and shall be heard as follows:—

1. The papers and records in the case shall be read in proper order, except such parts as may be omitted by consent.

2. The parties shall be heard, the appellant opening and closing.

3. Opportunity shall be given to the members of the judicatory appealed from to be heard.

4. Opportunity shall be given to the members of the higher judicatory to be heard.

5. The vote shall then be taken, without further debate, separately on each specification, the question being put in the form: Shall the specification be sustained? The specification having been read by the clerk and the question put by the President, the roll shall be called and the vote taken. If no one of the specifications shall be sustained and no error shall be found, the judgment of the lower judicatory shall stand. If an error or errors shall be found, the judicatory appealed to shall determine whether the judgment of the lower judicatory shall be reversed or modified; or the case remanded for a new trial; and the decision, accompanied with a recital of the error or errors found, shall be entered on the record. If the judicatory deems it wise, a definition of its action may be adopted, which shall be part of the record of the case.

ART. 181. Neither the appellant nor the members of the judicatory appealed

from shall vote in the case in any of the judicatories of the Church.

ART. 182. The necessary effect of an appeal is to stay all further proceedings in the case of admonition, of censure, or of erasure of name; but in the case of suspension, or of deposition, or of excommunication the judgment shall remain in force until finally reversed.

ART. 183. The decision of the last judicatory to which an appeal has been taken shall be valid and binding.

## SECTION 10.

### **Judicial Committee.**

ART. 184. The General Synod shall have power to appoint a Judicial Committee, consisting of five ministers and four elders, delegates to the General Synod, not more than two of whom shall be appointed from the delegates of the Classes embraced by any one Synod.

All complaints and appeals not involving charges of errors in fundamental Christian doctrines, when brought before the General Synod, may be referred to this Committee.

The Committee shall meet during the sessions of the General Synod to hear the appeals or complaints referred to it, and

shall determine, under the provisions of the Constitution, the regularity or irregularity of all the papers, and consider the question or questions at issue, and then by a majority shall come to a decision on the case. It shall bring in a report of its finding, giving a succinct statement of the main issue. If the General Synod by a majority vote approves the report, it shall stand as the final decision of the General Synod.

Important interests at stake that are likely to suffer in the long interval between the triennial meetings of the General Synod, may be heard by the Judicial Committee during the interval, the same as if the General Synod were in session, provided that both parties to an appeal or a complaint unite in a petition to the Committee requesting the meeting, and are willing to abide by the decision of the Judicial Committee thus assembled in special session; provided, further, that the Judicial Committee consents to convene in special session, and that thirty days' notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting is given to the parties to the appeal or complaint, and that the necessary expenses of the Judicial Committee are paid by the parties requesting the meeting.

## SECTION II.

### Restoration.

ART. 185. Members of the Church, deacons, elders, licentiates, or ministers who are under discipline may be reinstated either by the judicatory which disciplined them, or, with its official consent, by a co-ordinate judicatory; provided, however, that the evidence of their repentance and amendment is satisfactory. The reinstatement of a minister shall not be final until it shall have been approved by the Synod.

ART. 186. A minister or a licentiate who has been deposed for the sin of adultery or of fornication, or for any offense that affixes a public scandal to his character, shall not be restored to the ministry unless it shall clearly appear to the judicatory which deposed him that the restoration can be effected without injury to the cause of religion.

ART. 187. If a minister shall have been deposed but not excommunicated, he shall be entitled to the rights of a lay member; and Classis shall furnish him with a certificate to any congregation with which he may desire to connect himself. Such certificate shall state his exact relation to the Church.



## PART IV.

### DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP.

#### SECTION I.

##### **Doctrine.**

ART. 188. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are called canonical, being recognized as genuine and inspired, are received as the true and proper Word of God, and the ultimate rule and measure of the whole Christian faith and doctrine.

ART. 189. The Heidelberg Catechism is received as an authoritative expression of the truths taught in the Holy Scriptures, and is acknowledged to be the standard of doctrine in the Reformed Church in the United States.

#### SECTION 2.

##### **Worship.**

ART. 190. The essential parts of public worship in the sanctuary are an invocation, singing, prayer, reading the Word, preaching a sermon, giving the offerings, and the benediction. The order of worship and the selection of hymns approved or recommended by the General Synod shall be used in the regular Lord's Day service.

ART. 191. The chief festivals of the Church Year—Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday—and all days appointed by ecclesiastical or civil authority for fasting or thanksgiving, should be duly respected and observed by congregations and families by attending public worship in their churches.

ART. 192. The Lord's Day (Sunday) shall be kept a holy day, devoted to the public worship of the Lord in the sanctuary, to reading the Holy Scriptures, to private devotions and to works of love and mercy. Week-day meetings for prayer and daily family worship are also commended as important religious services.

### SECTION 3.

#### **The Sacraments.**

ART. 193. The sacraments of the Church, instituted by Christ, are two: Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

ART. 194. Children are received into the Church by baptism and are subject to its care and discipline. As soon as they are old enough to learn the Catechism and to be benefited by the pastor's instruction, they shall become members of the catechetical class.

ART. 195. A child shall be baptized if

one of its parents is a member of the Christian Church; but if neither is a member, it should not be baptized unless one of its parents shall manifest a desire to be admitted to the communion of the Church and promise to profit by the next opportunity, in which case the child shall be baptized.

ART. 196. Sponsors may be admitted in the baptism of infants, but the parents themselves also must assume every obligation. A person, however, shall not be a sponsor who is not in full communion with some branch of the Christian Church. This, in connection with the previous article, shall not be so construed as to prevent persons who adopt orphans or other children into their families from offering them to God in baptism.

ART. 197. Adults shall be baptized, if a minister has ascertained that they possess correct views of Christian doctrine, give evidence of true repentance and faith, and are willing to yield obedience to the requirements of Christ. But if in these respects the minister discovers deficiencies, he shall direct them to attend the usual catechetical instruction, and shall afterward proceed in relation to them as with other catechumens. If this, however, is impracti-

cable, he shall instruct them in some other suitable way.

ART. 198. Baptism shall be administered publicly in the church, if possible. The forms provided in the liturgy of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be used.

ART. 199. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed publicly in every congregation at least twice a year, and the celebration conducted according to the established order of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ART. 200. A service shall be held preparatory to the observance of the Lord's Supper. A meeting of the Spiritual Council shall be held before the communion is administered, and diligent inquiry shall be made whether any member has departed from the faith either in doctrine or in practice, to the end that all improper persons may be excluded from the Lord's table; and if the elders neglect this duty, the pastor is empowered to exercise it. In the congregational records the dates on which the holy communion has been administered and the names of the members who have communed shall be noted.

ART. 201. Only members of the Church

who are in full membership and not under discipline shall be admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper. Members, in good standing, of other congregations of the Reformed Church, and of other denominations holding the essential doctrines of the gospel, should be invited to participate in the observance of this sacrament.

ART. 202. The Lord's Supper shall be administered to the sick and infirm communicants who are not able to come to the house of God and who express a desire to receive the sacrament. An elder shall convey the elements to such persons when the pastor cannot minister to them. Whenever possible the bread and wine consecrated in the church shall be used.

#### SECTION 4.

##### **Rites.**

ART. 203. Confirmation, ordination and marriage are sacred church rites, which shall be administered according to the order prescribed in the liturgy of the Church.

ART. 204. Every pastor shall carefully prepare the youth in his pastoral charge for communicant membership in the Church by diligently instructing them in the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion.

The Heidelberg Catechism shall be used in such instruction.

ART. 205. Before admitting applicants for confirmation into full communion with the Church, the Spiritual Council shall be satisfied that the candidates understand the fundamental truths of the Christian religion and are governed by them in their walk and conversation.

ART. 206. In the act of ordination, whether in the case of a minister, an elder, or a deacon, only ordained ministers and elders of the Church shall take part, as provided in Article 60 of this Constitution. A person once ordained, whether he is a minister of the gospel, an elder, or a deacon, is ordained to his particular office for life.

ART. 207. Marriage is an ordinance of God and should be solemnized in accordance with the laws of the Church as well as of the State. A minister shall not unite in marriage a divorced person who is known to have been the guilty party in a divorce decree on the ground of adultery, which is the only Scriptural ground.

ART. 208. Members of the Church, having died in the faith and hope of the gospel, shall receive a Christian burial; the burial service shall be conducted according to the order prescribed by the Church,

## **AMENDMENTS.**

ART. 209. This Constitution may be amended or altered in any article by a two-thirds vote of the General Synod, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Classes.





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# FORMS

FOR THE USE OF THE

## Reformed Church

IN THE

## United States.

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Adopted by the General Synod of York,  
May, 1908.

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**The Publication Board of the Reformed Church in the U. S.,  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.**



# FORMS

FOR THE USE OF THE

## Reformed Church in the United States.

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### CONSTITUTION OF A CONGREGATION.

#### SECTION I.

##### *Name and Object.*

ARTICLE 1. The name of this congregation  
shall be .....  
.....  
.....

ARTICLE 2. The object of this congregation  
shall be to provide its members with the stated  
preaching of the Word, the administration of the  
sacraments, the facilities for public worship, and  
the exercise of Christian discipline; and to adopt  
and prosecute from time to time such measures  
as are in harmony with the spirit, teaching and  
customs of the Reformed Church in the United  
States, and as shall tend to promote the general  
interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

ARTICLE 3. This congregation shall be an or-  
ganic member of the Reformed Church in the  
United States, and shall be governed by the con-  
stitution, laws, and rules of said Church.

## SECTION II.

### *Officers and their Duties.*

ARTICLE 4. The officers of this congregation shall be a pastor (or pastors), — elders, — deacons, — trustees, a secretary, and a treasurer, whose general standard of duty shall be the Word of God and the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ARTICLE 5. It shall be the duty of the pastor to conduct the public worship of the sanctuary, to preach the gospel, to exercise pastoral oversight of the congregation, to dispense the holy sacraments, and in conjunction with the elders to administer Christian discipline.

ARTICLE 6. It shall be the duty of the elders to watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation, to maintain order in the House of God, to aid in visiting the sick, and to contribute according to their ability to the edification and consolation of all the members. They shall also provide the elements for the Lord's Supper when requested by the pastor.

ARTICLE 7. It shall be the duty of the deacons to co-operate with the other officers of the congregation to promote its general welfare, to gather the offerings for the relief of the poor and the necessities of the congregation, to distribute the alms, and to provide for the pastor's salary under the directions of the Consistory.

ARTICLE 8. The pastor, elders, and deacons of the congregation shall constitute the Consistory, which shall have oversight and government of the congregation and all the organizations. The pastor shall be the president of the Consistory, but when a charge is without a pastor, or the pastor is unable to attend, one of the



elders shall be chosen to preside. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 9. The Consistory shall have charge of the general affairs of the congregation, shall call congregational meetings, order collections for the apportionments of Classis and for other benevolent purposes, distribute alms through the deacons, provide for the audit of the treasurer's account, and make due provision for the support of the pastor. It shall keep a full and accurate record of its own proceedings, be the custodian of all congregational records, and submit any or all records to Classis when occasion requires it and the Classis requests it.

ARTICLE 10. The pastor or the secretary of the Consistory shall keep a complete record of all baptisms, confirmations, communicants, receptions by certificate, renewals of profession, dismissions, erasures of names, suspensions, excommunications, marriages, and deaths. The record shall be the property of the congregation.

ARTICLE 11. In calling a minister and in all matters of general interest, including the election of delegates to Classis or Synod, the Consistory shall be guided by the requirements of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ARTICLE 12.\* The members of the Consistory shall constitute the Board of Trustees, who shall have the care and control of the property of the congregation as a sacred trust, whether real or personal, in accordance with the provision of the Articles of Incorporation and of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States (Art. 12).

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\*This article does not apply when the charter provides for a separate Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE 13. The secretary of the Consistory shall also serve as the secretary of the Spiritual Council, of the Board of Trustees, and of the congregation, and shall perform faithfully the duties generally appertaining to such office.

ARTICLE 14. The treasurer, elected by the Consistory, shall be the treasurer of the congregation, and shall keep an accurate and faithful account of all moneys received and paid out; and he shall not disburse any funds unless properly authorized. He shall submit annually a detailed report of the finances to the Consistory and to the congregation.

ARTICLE 15. The Consistory shall hold stated monthly (or quarterly) meetings on the .... day of ..... and may hold special meetings at such other times as may be necessary; and also an annual meeting on the .... day of ..... of each year for the transaction of business and final settlement with the treasurer and other officers. All special meetings shall be called by the president; in the event of his absence, or inability or unwillingness to act, by the secretary when requested in writing to do so by a majority of the members.

ARTICLE 16. The pastor and elders shall constitute the Spiritual Council, whose duty it shall be to watch over the members of the congregation, to guard the doctrine of Christ, and to maintain strict and wholesome discipline; to admit members to full communion of the Church, and to exclude from it those who may err from the faith or offend in morals. It shall examine the catechumens applying for confirmation, and, before the observance of the Lord's Supper, inquire whether any member has departed from the doctrine of Christ in faith and practice, that those who are guilty may be disciplined as the

case may require. It shall furnish upon proper request members of the congregation, in good and regular standing, with certificates of dismissal to another congregation in the Reformed Church in the United States or to any orthodox Protestant Church that receives members by certificate from the Reformed Church in the United States. The pastor shall be the president, but if the pastor is absent one of the elders shall be chosen to preside. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. It shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings which shall be submitted to the Classis when occasion requires it and the Classis requests it.

### SECTION III.

#### *Elections and Organization.*

ARTICLE 17. Every communicant member of the congregation, in good and regular standing, shall be entitled to vote at all elections for pastor and officers, and on any question submitted to the congregation for action.

ARTICLE 18. An election for pastor shall be held according to the prescribed regulations of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States (Art. 70).

ARTICLE 19. When the pastor shall resign his charge or when three-fourths of the members of the Consistory shall make a written request to the pastor for his resignation, the prescribed regulations of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be observed (Art. 19).

ARTICLE 20. An election for elders and deacons shall be held at the annual meeting on ....., and those chosen shall serve ..... years and until their successors are elected and installed. All elections for officers shall be

by ballot and shall be determined by a majority of the votes cast.

ARTICLE 21. Nominations for the offices of elder and deacon shall be made by the Consistory, which shall present the name or the names of one or of two persons for each officer to be elected. Public notice of the nominations shall be given from the pulpit at least one week before the election. At the meeting for the election one additional person for each officer to be elected may be nominated by the congregation. A person shall not be voted for unless regularly nominated. All nominees must be in full communion with the Church and earnestly devoted to the cause of Christ. If possible each congregation shall have at least two elders and two deacons.

ARTICLE 22. Whenever a vacancy occurs by death, or resignation, or in any other way, the Consistory may fill the vacancy for the current year.

ARTICLE 23. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on ..... day for the transaction of regular business and for the election of officers. The Consistory may call a special meeting of the congregation, and at the written request of one-tenth of the communicant members shall issue a call for such meeting within two weeks after the request has been received. One week's previous public notice shall be given of the time, place and purpose of a special congregational meeting. The secretary shall keep full and accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings.

ARTICLE 24. The Consistory shall elect annually two of the elders as delegates, a primarius and a secundus, to represent the charge in Classis. They shall also be the delegates to

Synod whenever Synod meets in general convention. At least ten days before the annual meeting of the judicatory to which these delegates have been elected their credentials shall be sent to its Stated Clerk by the president or the secretary of the Consistory.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Members and their Duties.*

ARTICLE 25. All persons shall be members of this congregation and shall be entitled to all its rights and privileges, who have been duly received into its communion by confirmation, by certificate, or by renewal of profession, and have not been excluded by the process of Christian discipline.

ARTICLE 26. It shall be the duty of every member of this congregation to live a sober, righteous and godly life, and to labor faithfully in bringing others unto Christ; to obey the laws and rules prescribed in the Word of God and abide by the Constitution of the Church; to contribute liberally and in proportion to his means to the support of the gospel and for the extension of the kingdom of Christ; to attend faithfully the public services of the Church, engage diligently in private devotions, and partake of the Lord's Supper at least once a year. Parents shall present their children at the proper time for baptism and give special attention to the Christian training of the members of their household.

ARTICLE 27. If a member shall neglect to partake of the Holy Communion or refuse to contribute to the support of the Church or continuously absent himself from the public worship for a period of one year, such conduct shall be regarded as an offense against the Church, and he

shall be admonished by the pastor or the elders. If after admonition he continues in such neglect of duty for another year, the Spiritual Council shall notify him that he is no longer in good and regular standing. If before the expiration of another year he shall express a desire to be reinstated and shall promise to attend to his duties, the Spiritual Council shall reinstate him. If at the end of the third year he shall not express a desire for reinstatement, or if any member shall unite with another congregation or denomination without a certificate of dismissal, the Spiritual Council in either case shall erase his name from the church register.

ARTICLE 28. Members, who, on account of change of residence or for other proper reasons, shall desire to change their membership from one congregation to another congregation of the Reformed Church in the United States, shall obtain a certificate of dismissal and as soon as possible shall unite with the other congregation. The Spiritual Council dismissing them shall communicate immediately the fact to the Spiritual Council of the congregation to which they have been dismissed; and, when they are received, the latter shall notify promptly the former of their reception. Members dismissed shall be amenable to the congregation dismissing them until they shall have been received by another congregation. A certificate of dismissal shall be valid for only one year from its date.

## SECTION V.

### *By-Laws.*

ARTICLE 29. The congregation may from time to time enact such by-laws for its government as may be deemed necessary; provided, however, that they do not conflict with this constitu-

tion or the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

#### SECTION VI.

##### *Amendments.*

ARTICLE 30. This constitution may be altered or amended by the congregation by a vote of two-thirds of the members present either at an annual meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose; provided that at least one week's notice of the proposed change shall have been given.

\* \* \*

### CONSTITUTION OF A JOINT CONSISTORY OF A CHARGE.

#### SECTION I.

##### *Name and Object.*

ARTICLE 1. This Association shall be named "The Joint Consistory of ..... Charge in .....". It shall be composed of the members of the consistories of the congregations included in the charge, and shall be subject to the Constitution and Rules of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ARTICLE 2. The object of this Association shall be to provide the charge with the stated preaching of the gospel and with the other means of grace; and to attend to whatever relates to the general interest and prosperity of the charge, such as the calling of a pastor, the provision for his salary, and the erection and maintenance of a parsonage.

## SECTION II.

### *Officers and their Duties.*

ARTICLE 3. The pastor shall be the president of the Joint Consistory, but if he is absent or unable to preside one of the elders shall be chosen to preside. The other officers, such as a secretary and a treasurer, shall be elected at the annual meeting, and they shall discharge the duties usually devolving upon such officers and shall serve until their successors are elected.

## SECTION III.

### *Meetings.*

ARTICLE 4. The Joint Consistory shall meet annually on the ..... day of ..... of each year for the transaction of business and may hold special meetings at such other times as may be necessary. All special meetings shall be called by the president, but if he is absent, or unable or unwilling to act, by the secretary when requested in writing to do so by the majority of the members. Previous notice of special meetings shall be given to all the members.

ARTICLE 5. An election for pastor shall be held according to the prescribed regulations of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States (Art. 70). If a majority of the votes in the whole charge are cast for the minister nominated, a call shall be made out and sent to him by the Joint Consistory.

ARTICLE 6. The support of the pastor shall be distributed among the congregations as may from time to time be agreed upon by the Joint Consistory. At its annual meeting it shall be the duty of the Joint Consistory to see that this obligation is punctually discharged.



ARTICLE 7. The time of the pastor shall be devoted to the several congregations in such ratio or proportion as shall from time to time be agreed upon by the Joint Consistory and the pastor.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Resignation of the Pastor.*

ARTICLE 8. When the pastor resigns his charge or when three-fourths of the members of the Joint Consistory make a written request to the pastor for his resignation, the prescribed regulations of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be observed (Art. 19).

#### SECTION V.

##### *Real Estate and Parsonage.*

ARTICLE 9. The Joint Consistory may purchase and hold in trust grounds for parsonage and for other church purposes, and may improve and manage the same; and whenever any one of the congregations shall become separated from the charge by action of the Classis, it shall be entitled to an equitable repayment of its share in the same.

#### SECTION VI.

##### *Election of Delegates.*

ARTICLE 10. The Joint Consistory shall elect annually two of the elders as delegates, a primarius and secundus, to represent the charge in Classis. They shall also be the delegates to Synod whenever Synod meets in general convention. At least ten days before the annual meeting of the judicatory to which the delegates have been

elected their credentials shall be sent to its Stated Clerk by the president or the secretary of the Consistory.

## SECTION VII.

### *Amendments.*

ARTICLE II. This constitution may be altered or amended by the Joint Consistory by a two-thirds vote of the members present at an annual meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose, provided that at least one week's notice of the proposed change shall have been given.

\* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

It is hereby certified that .....  
and ..... were by me  
united in the bonds of holy matrimony, accord-  
ing to the ordinance of God and in conformity  
to law and the custom of the Church, this .....  
day of ..... A. D. 19...

.....  
*Witness:* ..... *Minister of the Gospel.*  
.....  
.....

\* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM.

This is to certify that .....  
a ..... of ..... and his wife  
....., born at .....  
..... on the ..... day of .....

A. D. 19...., was baptized on the ..... day of  
..... A. D. 19....

..... *Pastor.*  
..... Church.

\* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF CONFIRMATION.

This is to certify that .....,  
after having been duly instructed in the doctrines  
and duties of the Christian Religion, according  
to the Word of God and the Heidelberg Cate-  
chism, and having professed faith in Jesus Christ,  
was confirmed as a member of the Reformed  
Church in the United States, in.....  
Church at .....  
on the .....day of .....  
A. D. 190....

..... *Pastor.*

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before  
men, him will I confess before my Father which  
is in heaven.

\* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF DISMISSION OF CHURCH MEMBERS.\*

This is to certify that.....  
(together with .... baptized children.....  
.....) is a member, in good and regular  
standing, of .....Reformed Church at  
.....within the bounds of .....  
Classis, and .....Synod. At  
....own request ....is now dismissed for the  
purpose of connecting ....self with .....Re-  
formed Church at .....to whose

---

\*See Arts. 5 and 76 of the Constitution.

Christian fellowship and confidence ..... is hereby affectionately recommended; and when ..... shall be received by it ..... peculiar relation to this congregation shall cease. Official notice of this reception shall be given to this Spiritual Council.

By order of the Spiritual Council.

*Date* ..... 190....

*Signed* .....

(Signed by the pastor or the secretary of the Spiritual Council.)

\* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF RECEPTION OF DIS- MISSED CHURCH MEMBERS.

.....190....  
This is to certify that .....  
has been received as a member of the.....  
.....on Certificate of Dis-  
mission from the .....  
congregation ....., dated  
.....190....

*Date* ..... 190....

*Signed* .....

(Signed by the pastor or the secretary of the Spiritual Council.)

\* \* \*

## CHURCH REGISTER.

“The pastor or the secretary of the Consistory shall keep a complete record of all baptisms, confirmations, communicants, receptions by certificate, renewals of profession, dismissions, erasures of names, suspensions, excommunications, marriages, and deaths. The record shall be the property of the Congregation” (Constitution, Art. 18).

# I. OFFICERS.

Names.						Ordination.	Installation.	Dissolut. of Pastoral Relation.	Term of Service.	Re-marks.
Pastors.	Elders.	Deacons.	Trustees.							

# II. MEMBERS.

Names.		Mode of Reception.			Losses.					Commenced.			
		Confirmation, When?	Certificate, When and Where from?	Renewal, When?	Died., When?	Dismissed, When and Where to?	Erased, When?	Suspended, When?	Excommunicated, When?	Month.	Month.	Month.	Month.
Unconfirmed.										Year .....			
Communicants.													

### III. BAPTISMS.

Names.	Parents or Sponsors.	Birth.	Date of Baptism.	Officiating Minister.	Place.

### IV. CONFIRMATIONS.

Names.	When Baptized.		Date of Confirmation.	Officiating Minister.	Place.
	Infancy.	Adult.			

### V. DEATHS.

Names.	Members.		Date of Death.	Date of Burial.	Age.	Officiating Minister.	Place of Burial.
	Confirmed.	Unconfir'd.					

### VI. MARRIAGES.

Names.	Residence.	Date of Marriage.	Place.	Officiating Minister.	Witnesses.

## RECOMMENDATION OF A STUDENT TO CLASSIS.

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that ..... is a communicant member of the Reformed Church at ..... in good and regular standing, and sustains an approved moral character; that in our opinion he possesses such qualifications, with respect to piety, honesty and capacity, as to render him worthy to prepare for the Christian Ministry, to the glory of God and the edification of the Church; and that we therefore recommend him to the favor and confidence of the Classis of .....

*Date*..... *Pastor*.  
 ..... *Elders*.  
 .....  
 ..... *Deacons*.  
 .....  
 ..... *Consistory*.

\* \* \*

## TRANSFER OF A STUDENT FROM ONE CLASSIS TO ANOTHER.

It is hereby certified that the bearer..... is a student of ..... at ..... preparing himself for the gospel ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States. He is under the care of ..... Classis ..... Synod, and is in good and regular standing. As such he is now at his own request transferred to the Classis of.....Synod, to continue his studies under its care; and to

whose Christian fellowship and confidence he is hereby affectionately recommended; and when he shall be received by it, his relation to this Classis shall cease, of which reception official notice shall be given to this Classis.

By order of Classis.

....., *President.*

....., *Stated Clerk.*

*Date* ..... A. D. 19....

\* \* \*

## RECOMMENDATION OF A STUDENT BY A CLASSIS TO A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

This is to certify that at a meeting of.....  
..... Classis .....  
Synod, held at .....  
on the ..... day of .....  
A. D. 19...., ....., a communicant member of the Reformed congregation at.....  
....., in good and regular standing, and desiring to prepare for the gospel ministry in the Reformed Church in the United States, was duly examined as to his motives, piety and talents. The examination proved satisfactory, and Classis took him under its care and direction. He is hereby recommended to the Christian regard and confidence of the Faculty and the Board of Visitors of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at....., [or the Board of Education as worthy of beneficiary aid]. Given this ..... day of ..... A. D. 19....

By order of Classis.

....., *Stated Clerk.*



## CERTIFICATE OF LICENSURE.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the Church, greeting:

Be it known, that .....  
after having furnished acceptable testimonials of his Christian character and having sustained a satisfactory examination in the different literary and theological studies prescribed for Students for the Ministry by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States, and having complied with the requirements of the said Church, was regularly licensed to preach the gospel under the provisions of the aforesaid Constitution, by order of the.....  
.....at a meeting held at ..... on the ..... day of ..... A. D. 19.... He is hereby recommended to the favor and attention of all those to whom these presents may come.

[SEAL]

In testimony whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names and affixed the Seal of ..... this ..... day of..... in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and .....

..... *President,*  
..... *Stated Clerk.*

\* \* \*

## TESTIMONIAL OF ORDINATION.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the Church, greeting:

Be it known, that .....  
after having sustained a satisfactory examination

in the different literary and theological studies prescribed for Students for the Ministry by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States, and having complied with the requirements of said Church, was, by order of .....  
ordained and solemnly set apart to the work of the Christian Ministry, according to the Word of God and the rites and customs of the Reformed Church in the United States, and received into full ministerial communion at.....  
.....on the .....  
day of .....A. D. 19....  
He is hereby recommended to the Christian fellowship and attention of all those to whom these presents shall come, as qualified to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments of the Church.

[SEAL]

In testimony whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names and affixed the Seal of .....  
on the .....day of.....  
.....in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and .....

.....*President,*  
.....*Stated Clerk.*

\* \* \*

## CALL OF A MINISTER.

To the Rev. ....

At an election for pastor held in the.....  
congregation (charge) on the .....day  
of .....A. D. 19.... you were duly  
elected to that office; and in accordance with

the instructions given us, we, the elders and deacons of the aforesaid congregation (charge), do hereby unite in solemnly calling you to the pastoral office as above mentioned, and affectionately urge upon you the acceptance of our call. The duties which will be required of you are those which usually pertain to the pastoral office and are specifically set forth in the Word of God and the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

To encourage you in the discharge of the duties of your important and responsible office, we promise you, in the name of the congregation (charge), all proper attention, love and obedience in the Lord; and in consideration of your service, and that you may be relieved of temporal cares as far as possible, we do obligate ourselves in their behalf to pay you for your support an annual sum of.....dollars in .....payments, so long as you shall continue our pastor, together with the use of [the parsonage belonging to the congregation (charge).] a house which shall be provided for your accommodation.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names, this ..... day of, ....., in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and.....

*Elders.*

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

*Deacons.*

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

## DISMISSION OF A MINISTER.\*

This is to certify that the Rev.....  
is a minister of the Reformed Church in the  
United States, in connection with the Classis  
of .....of the .....  
Synod, in good and regular standing. As such  
he is now, at his own request, dismissed to unite  
with the Classis of.....and  
..... Synod, to whose  
Christian fellowship and confidence he is cor-  
dially recommended; and when received by it  
his peculiar relation to this Classis shall cease,  
of which reception official notice must be given  
to this Classis.

By order of Classis.

Date .....A. D. 19....

..... *President.*

....., *Stated Clerk.*

\* \* \*

## RECEPTION OF A DISMISSED MINISTER.

This is to certify that the Rev.....  
has been received into full connection with the  
Classis of ..... of the  
..... Synod, on a Certificate  
of Dismission from the Classis of.....  
of the ..... Synod, dated  
.....A. D. 19....

Date .....A. D. 19....

..... *Signed* ..... *Stated Clerk.*

\* \* \*

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\* This certificate of dismission may be adapted for  
use as a form of dismission of a licentiate.

## CALL OF A TEACHER OF THEOLOGY.

To the Rev.....

At a meeting of the.....Synod  
(or Synods) of the Reformed Church in the  
United States held at.....on  
the .....day of .....A. D.  
19...., you were duly elected to the Professor-  
ship of .....in the  
Theological Seminary at.....  
In accordance with the instructions of said  
Synod (or Synods), we hereby present you with  
a call to the Professorship as aforesaid, and af-  
fectionately urge upon you the acceptance there-  
of. You will be expected to give instruction to  
the students committed to your charge in such  
branches as pertain to your department, under  
the supervision of the Board of Visitors of the  
said Seminary, with such modifications as the  
Synod (or Synods) may hereafter direct. And  
in consideration of your services to be rendered  
and to free you from temporal anxieties and  
cares, we promise you for your support, in the  
name of the Synod (or Synods), as long as  
you continue teacher in the Seminary as afore-  
said, the sum of .....dollars  
annually in .....payments [to-  
gether with the use of a free dwelling].

By order of the Synod.

[SEAL] In witness whereof we have  
hereunto subscribed our names  
and affixed the seal of Synod,  
this ..... day of .....  
in the year of our Lord, one  
thousand nine hundred and

.....

..... *President,*

..... *Stated Clerk.*

## CREDENTIALS OF ELDERS TO CLASSIS OR SYNOD.

This is to certify, that at a meeting of the Consistory [or Joint Consistory] of the..... charge, held at .....on the .....day of .....19...., Elder .....was duly elected delegate *primarius* and Elder .....his *secundus*, to represent said charge at the annual and special meetings of..... Classis [and Synod], during the current [classical or synodical] year beginning..... 19....

..... *Stated Clerk.*

(Date) .....A. D. 19....

NOTE.—The proper officer to sign the above certificate or credentials is the secretary of the Consistory, when there is but *one* congregation, or the secretary of the Joint Consistory, when there are *two* or *more* congregations in a charge; but, if for some good reason the secretary can not do so, then the pastor shall sign it.

Moreover, when the Synod meets in *general convention*, each pastoral charge is entitled to be represented by a delegated elder, who must receive his credentials from the Consistory or the Joint Consistory as the case may be; but in case the Synod meets as a *delegated body*, then the delegates, both ministers and elders, are elected by the respective classes according to the prescribed constitutional ratio, and their credentials must be furnished by the stated clerks of the classes.

\* \* \*

## CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES FROM CLASSIS TO SYNOD.

This is to certify that.....Classis of the Synod of ....., at its annual [or special] meeting held at..... on the .....day of.....

.....A. D. 19...., duly elected the following members of the Classis as delegates to the ..... Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, to convene in..... Church at .....County, and State of .....on the ..... day of .....A. D. 19...., at..... o'clock ....M., namely:

MINISTERS. ELDERS.

PRIMARI.

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

SECUNDI.

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

[SEAL]

Given under my hand and seal of .....Classis  
.....day of .....  
A. D. 19.....  
*Stated Clerk* of .....  
Classis.

\* \* \*

CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES FROM  
CLASSIS TO GENERAL SYNOD.

This is to certify, that.....  
Classis of the .....Synod of  
.....at its annual (special) meeting  
at .....on the .....day of  
.....A. D. 19...., duly elected the fol-

lowing members of the Classis as delegates to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, to convene in..... Church at .....County, and State of .....on the .....day of..... A. D. 19...., at .....o'clock ....M., viz.:

MINISTERS.

ELDERS.

PRIMARI.

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

SECUNDI.

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

\* \* \*

## ROLL OF MINISTERS OF CLASSIS.

It is further certified that on this..... day of .....A. D. 19...., the following ordained ministers constitute the clerical roll of .....Classis:

[Here write the names of the ministers.]

SEAL	Given under my hand and the
OF THE	seal of .....Classis,
CLASSIS.	this .....day of
	.....A. D. 19....
	..... Stated Clerk.
	of ..... Classis.

N. B.—Write names of persons and places *plainly* and give the first or Christian name of delegates in full. When properly filled out, return the roll at once to the stated clerk of the General Synod.



# CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES FROM GENERAL SYNOD TO CORRE- SPONDING BODIES.

This is to certify that by the official authority  
of the General Synod of the Reformed Church  
in the United States, held at.....  
in .....A. D. 19.....  
was appointed delegate *primarius*, and.....  
.....his *secundus*, to represent said Church  
in the .....to convene  
in .....on the .....  
day of .....A. D. 19....

Attest:

.....  
Stated Clerk.

(Date) .....A. D. 19....

\* \* \*

# CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES FROM SYNODS TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

This is to certify, that at the annual meeting  
of the Synod of .....of  
the Reformed Church in the United States, held  
at ..... in the month of.....  
A. D. 19...., the Rev.....  
was duly elected delegate *primarius*, and the  
Rev. ....as his *secundus*, to  
represent said Synod in the sessions of the Synod  
of ..... of the .....  
Church, which is to convene in the.....  
Church at ..... on the.....  
day of .....A. D. 19.... at .....  
o'clock .....M.

Given at .....this .....  
day of ..... A. D. 19....

Attest:

..... *Stated Clerk*  
of .....

\* \* \*

## CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES TO AL- LIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the  
Great Head of the Church, greeting:

This is to certify, that the General Synod of  
the Reformed Church in the United States, at  
its triennial meeting held at.....  
in .....19...., .....  
was duly elected delegate *primarius*, and.....  
.....his *secundus*, to represent said  
Church in the.....General Council  
of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches hold-  
ing the Presbyterian System, to convene in  
..... on the ..... day of  
.....A. D. 19....

..... *Stated Clerk.*

[SEAL]

\* \* \*

## FORMS OF ACCUSATION AGAINST AN OFFENDER.\*

Form of Accusation on one or more charges,  
giving forms of charges for various sins.

“When an individual brings an accusation, he shall be  
named as the accuser; and when an accusation is  
brought by a judicatory of the Church, “The Reformed  
Church in the United States” shall be named as the  
accuser. The person or persons against whom the accu-  
sation is brought shall be named as the accused” (Con-  
stitution, Art. 137).

“Each charge shall be accompanied with the names of  
the witnesses” (Constitution, Art. 140).

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES	}	ACCUSATION
Against		brought before .....
[Here give accused's name in full.]	}	..... Classis, (or Spiritual Council of ..... as the case may re- quire).

The .....day of .....A. D. 19....

The Reformed Church in the United States,  
accuser, complains of .....  
accused, in this cause, and charges him the said  
.....as follows:

CHARGE A. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of heresy.

Spec. 1. In this that he did on the.....  
day of .....A. D. 19...., preach and  
proclaim publicly from the pulpit of.....  
Reformed Church at .....County  
of .....State of .....  
heretical doctrine in the following words.....  
[Here insert as nearly as possible the heretical expres-  
sions charged.]

.....or words of the same import  
and meaning, which are contrary to the teach-  
ings of the Word of God as interpreted under  
questions ..... of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Spec. 2. In this that he did publish and de-  
clare in an article appearing over his own sig-  
nature in .....the following,  
[Here insert number, date and name of paper, book or  
periodical wherein the article appeared.]

viz.: .....which is contrary  
[Here insert the heretical publication charged, or such  
reference that will clearly identify the same.]

to the Word of God as interpreted under

questions ..... of the Heidelberg Catechism.  
[Go on and state every specification of heresy you can  
prove against the accused and close the charge.]

All of which show the unfitness of the said  
.....for the ministry of Christ  
and the teaching of the Word.

CHARGE B. That the said .....  
is guilty of blasphemy.

Spec. 1. In that he did contrary to the laws  
of God and the moral sense of humanity on the  
.....day of .....A. D.  
19...., in the house of .....  
in the city of .....(or on  
the public streets, viz.: corner.....  
streets of the city of.....) in  
the County of .....in the  
State of .....and at sundry  
times before and thereafter, before the bringing  
of this accusation, blasphemously and frivolously  
use the name of God and of holy things and of  
our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, publicly and  
in vain.

CHARGE C. That he, the said .....  
is guilty of fraudulent detention and mis-  
appropriation of trust funds.

Spec. 1. In this that he did on the.....  
day of .....A. D. 19...., as pastor  
of .....charge (or as elder or as  
deacon of .....congregation of  
.....charge), of .....Classis  
of the Reformed Church in the United States,  
receive the sum of .....dollars, good and  
lawful money, given at a collection held on the  
.....day of .....A. D. 19....,

in .....Reformed Church at.....  
County of .....State of.....  
for the benevolent objects of the Church, to be  
paid over by him to the treasurer of.....  
(Classis, Board or Synod), which said money  
he failed to pay over as aforesaid as he was in  
duty bound to do, and has misappropriated and  
used the same for his own private purposes, and  
not for the purposes for which it was entrusted  
to him, and has thereby defrauded the Church  
and thereby transgressed against good faith,  
honesty and the law of God.

CHARGE D. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of creating (or guilty of the at-  
tempt to create) schism in the Church.

Spec. 1. In this that he did at a.....  
meeting of .....Reformed congregation  
.....held in the .....of  
said congregation on the .....day of  
.....A. D. 19...., counsel, advocate  
and advise a division of said church and congre-  
gation, and did continue to do so at sundry times  
and places before and thereafter, and before the  
bringing of this accusation, and did attempt to  
organize out of the membership of said congre-  
gation or a part thereof, a society or congrega-  
tion independent from the general organization  
of the Reformed Church in the United States,  
to the detriment and injury of said church.

CHARGE E. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of malicious and willful lying.

Spec. 1. In this, that he did at a meeting of  
the .....of .....Reformed  
Church held at.....in the city of

.....County of .....State of  
.....on the .....day of.....  
A. D. 19.... utter, say and express the following,  
viz.: "....." or words to

[Here insert what he said.]

that effect, then and there knowing the same  
to be utterly false and untrue.

Spec. 2. And in this, that he did at a meeting  
of.....held at .....on the  
.....day of .....A. D. 19....  
positively deny that he the said.....ever  
did utter, say, or express the words as stated  
in Spec. 1 of this charge.

Spec. 3. And that in this, that he did, etc.,  
.....

CHARGE F. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of perjury.

Spec. 1. In this, that he did on the.....  
day of .....A. D. 19.... in the court  
of .....of .....County.....  
State of .....as a witness called to  
testify in the hearing of a cause in said court,  
wherein .....was accuser and  
..... was accused, upon his  
solemn oath (or affirmation) testify and say  
"....." or words to that

[Here insert what he testified.]

effect then and there knowing the same to be  
utterly false and untrue.

Spec. 2. And in this, that he did on the  
.....day of .....A. D. 19....  
before the Spiritual Council of.....  
Reformed Church of .....in the hear-  
ing of a cause wherein the Reformed Church in  
the United States was accuser and.....

was accused upon his solemn oath (or affirmation) testify and say, "....."

[Here insert what he testified.]

or words to that effect then and there knowing the same to be utterly false and untrue.

CHARGE G. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of fornication.

Spec. 1. In this, that he did contrary to the law of God and the good morals of society on the .....day of .....A. D. 19.... in the house of one.....at No. .... Street, County of.....State of..... have carnal knowledge and criminal intercourse with one ....., she, the said..... not being his lawful wife at the time.

Spec. 2. In this that he, the said..... did on .....day of ..... A. D. 19.... enter the house of .....in .....County of .....State of .....and then and there did have carnal knowledge and criminal intercourse with one .....the daughter of..... which said .....was not his lawful wife at the time.

CHARGE H. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of adultery.

Spec. 1. In this, that he did contrary to the law of God and the good morals of society, on the .....day of .....A. D. 19.... in the house of ..... in..... County of .....State of ..... have carnal knowledge and criminal intercourse with one ....., she, the said .....being at the time the lawful wife of ..... (or as the case may

be), he, the said ..... at the time  
being the lawful husband of .....  
his wife.

[State either one or both of these facts as the case  
may be.]

CHARGE I. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of drunkenness.

Spec. 1. In this, that he uses alcoholic, malt  
and vinous (or either) liquors habitually to ex-  
cess and at times by the use thereof becomes  
intoxicated.

Spec. 2. In this, that he, the said.....  
did on the..... day of.....A. D.  
19.... in the town of.....in the  
County of .....State of .....  
appear on the public streets of said town (or  
as the case may be) intoxicated, unable to have  
proper control of his person, then and there con-  
ducting himself in a manner unbecoming a mem-  
ber of the Church of Christ.

CHARGE J. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of gross profanation of the Lord's  
Day.

Spec. 1. In this, that he did contrary to the  
law of God and to the injury of good morals  
in the neighborhood he lives, on the .....  
day of .....A. D. 19...., said day  
being a Sunday and at other Sundays before or  
thereafter, before the bringing of this accusation  
keep and maintain at his dwelling place (or  
business place) at No.... Street.....  
City of .....State of .....  
public entertainments with music and dancing  
and dealing out intoxicating liquors (or state  
whatever acts of desecration are charged.)



CHARGE K. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of contentiousness.

Spec. I. In this, that he did wrongfully and maliciously accuse the Pastor (or as the case may be the Elders and Deacons) of..... Church of .....at sundry times before the bringing of this accusation, of conduct unbecoming a Pastor (or Elders or Deacons) of the Church, and of being arbitrary, domineering, haughty, hypocritical, dishonest (or similar things as the case may be) and has with malicious intent at sundry times during the last year passed, stirred up strife, contention, dissatisfaction and hatred among the members of..... Church and congregation of.....to the great injury of peace and harmony in said church and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in said community.

An accusation may contain either one or more charges; those given in the foregoing pages are for sins named in Article 124 of the constitution. Any offense morally wrong is indictable before a church judicatory. Each charge must first state the offense in plain unequivocal terms; each occurrence of the offense must be separately specified, giving time and place, when and where the wrong was done as near as possible. After each charge is set forth in alphabetical order in consecutively numbered specifications, close the accusation as follows: All of which the accuser above named avers to be ready and able to prove and verify by good and sufficient evidence.

If the accusation is brought by order of a judicatory in the name of the Reformed Church it is signed:

.....	}	Committee appointed
.....		for the prosecution of
.....		this case by .....
.....	}	.....
.....		[Here state the judicatory
.....	}	.....
.....		ordering the prosecution.]

If the accusation is brought by an individual, he or she signs the accusation, but in that case the heading of the accusation must be as follows:

.....	}	ACCUSATION
[Here state name in full of Accused.]		brought before Spiritual Council of (or as the case may be)
<i>Against</i>	}	.....
.....		Classis of the Reformed Church. The
[Here state name in full of Accuser.]	}	..... day of .....
		A. D. 19....

I,.....the accuser in this accusation brought by me against.....the accused before .....do  
[Here state the judicatory.]

hereby state, that I am a member in good standing in .....Reformed Church at .....having last communed at the communion celebrated in said Church on.....last passed and being a regular contributor to said church; that before bringing this accusation, the law of the church as laid down in Article 139 of the constitution, was duly observed by the accuser, but the offer was not accepted by the accused, and that I have good and sufficient reason to believe the facts set forth in the following charges to be true and correct, and that I am not actuated by malice or ill-will in making the charges herein contained.

And now, I, the said.....accuser say,

CHARGE A. That he, the accused.....  
is guilty of .....

Spec. 1. In this, that he did.....

*Accusations* based upon an investigation had upon *evil rumors*:

The Reformed Church in the United States <i>Against</i> ..... [Name of Accused.]	}	ACCUSATION upon investigation of Evil Rumors brought before ..... The .....day of..... A. D. 19....
---	---	--

WHEREAS, the Spiritual Council of.....  
at ..... (or .....Classis  
.....of the Reformed Church) were  
credibly informed, that evil rumors were in cir-  
culation against .....a .....  
of .....at .....that he, the  
said .....is guilty of .....  
Whereupon the said Spiritual Council (or  
Classis) having proper jurisdiction in the matter  
did convene in special session in.....at  
.....on the .....day of.....  
A. D. 19.... said meeting being legally called  
for the purpose, did then and there appoint  
.....a committee to investigate  
[Here insert the names of committee.]  
said rumors and make report of their investiga-  
tion to said .....and did  
[Classis or Spiritual Council.]  
then and there adjourn to meet on.....  
day of .....A. D. 19.... in.....  
at .....to hear said report and did  
meet in accordance with said adjournment at  
which meeting the aforesaid committee did re-  
port that they have investigated the evil rumors  
aforesaid in circulation against the said.....  
.....and find them to be extensively cir-  
culated in the neighborhood where he lives, well  
rounded, permanent and not transient and ac-  
compared with strong presumption of truth

that he, the said .....is guilty of  
....., whereupon the said.....  
[Here state the names of the offenses.]

Classis (or.....Spiritual Council) did  
appoint .....members of the Re-  
formed Church a committee to bring accusation  
against the said..... And now the  
said committee in the name of the Reformed  
Church in the United States do say,

CHARGE A. That he, the said.....  
is guilty of .....  
Spec. I. In this that he did.....

\* \* \*

## FORMS OF COMPLAINT.

To the Elders of the Spiritual Council of  
.....Reformed Church at.....  
County of .....State of.....

Complaint of

..... complainant	} And now .....
<i>Against</i>	
..... defendant	
Pastor of said.....	
..... Church.	} The petition of.....
	} respectfully sets forth

1.) That your petitioner is a member in good  
and regular standing of.....Reformed  
Church and congregation at .....

2.) That your petitioner is the father of  
male child born to him in lawful wedlock on the  
.....day of .....A. D. 19....

3.) That the defendant although repeatedly  
thereunto requested, has refused or neglected to

perform the holy rite of baptism upon said child, as he is as a minister of the Gospel in duty bound to do.

Your petitioner therefore prays your reverend body to cite the Rev.....to appear before you on a day certain to answer this complaint, giving him due notice together with a copy of this complaint, and your petitioner awaits your proper action and notice in the matter.

Most respectfully,

.....  
[Signature of petitioner.]

To the Reverend Fathers and Brethren of  
.....Classis of the Reformed Church  
in the United States.

Complaint of

..... complainant

*Against*

.....  
[Here give the names.]

The Consistory of  
Reformed congregation  
of .....

..... defendant

And now .....

A. D. 19....

The plaintiff by his  
petition respectfully  
sets forth.

1.) That your petitioner is the pastor of  
.....charge of which .....  
Reformed congregation at .....  
is a component part.

2.) That the Consistory (the Elders and  
Deacons) of said.....congregation  
have joined in a call to the petitioner dated  
.....A. D. 19.... in which the annual  
salary of the pastor is stipulated at.....  
dollars of which said defendants agreed to pay  
the one-half, viz.:.....dollars, per  
year, payable quarterly.

3.) That the said defendants have failed to collect and to pay over to your petitioner the said annual salary as they agreed to do and that the sum of.....dollars is due to the petitioner from them up to the close of last quarter.....day of .....A. D. 19....

Your petitioner therefore prays your reverend body to, cite .....Elders and.....  
.....Deacons of said .....  
Reformed Church to appear before you on a day certain to answer this complaint giving them due notice together with a copy of this complaint and your petitioner waits your proper orders and notice in the matter.

Most respectfully,

.....  
[Signature of petitioner.]

To the Reverend Fathers and Brethren of  
.....Synod of the Reformed Church  
in the United States.

Complaint of

..... complainant	}	And now .....
<i>Against</i>		A. D. 19....
.....Classis of		The plaintiff by his
the Reformed Church,	}	petition respectfully
defendant.		sets forth.

1.) That he is an ordained minister in good standing in the Reformed Church in the United States and in.....Classis of said Church standing in connection with said Classis since .....day of.....A. D. 19....

2.) That your petitioner desires to remove to the State of .....and within the bounds and jurisdiction of.....Classis, has therefore requested said.....Classis to issue to him an honorable dismissal to said

.....Classis which said.....  
Classis failed to do.

Whereof your petitioner complains and therefore prays your reverend body to cite said.....  
.....Classis through its proper officers or representatives to appear before your reverend body to be assembled in regular annual session on the ..... day of .....A. D. 19... in .....Reformed Church at ..... to answer this complaint and to show cause why the humble request of your petitioner above stated should not be granted to him, giving due notice together with a copy of this complaint to the proper officers of said .....Classis and your petitioner awaits proper orders and notice in the matter.

Most respectfully,

.....

[Signature of petitioner.]

Complaint may be brought in any of the preceding forms by any member or minister of the Church, before any of the church judicatories, in matters concerning the Church.

\* \* \*

## CITATION OF AN ACCUSED PERSON.

*Citation* to be served on defendants, in accusations or in complaints:

### FORM OF CITATION.

WHEREAS, Charges (or complaint) were (or was) lodged with the President (or Stated Clerk or Secretary) of .....  
[Here insert the title of the judicatory to which the accusation or complaint is directed.]

against you ..... a member of (or the minister of) ..... Reformed Church at ..... (or in case of a complaint against a judicatory insert its title) a correct copy whereof is hereto attached.

Now, in pursuance of the requirement of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States, that is sent to cite you to be and to appear before .....

[Here insert the title of the judicatory issuing the summons.]

assembled in special (or regular annual) session in the .....

[Here insert the place and date of the meeting of the judicatory for trial describing place so it can easily be found, and give the hour of the opening of session.]

to answer the charges (or complaint) aforesaid; and then and there present all matters of plea and defense proper and in order.

By order and authority of the .....

[Here insert the title of judicatory issuing this.]

at ..... this ..... day of .....  
A. D. 19...

.....  
Secretary, President or Stated Clerk.

**NOTE.**—The second citation of the person accused shall be the same in form as the first citation excepting the necessary change of date. The following paragraph shall also be added: "This being your second citation you are hereby informed that if you refuse to appear you shall not only be liable to censure for contumacy, but the judicatory may proceed with the investigation and decision of the case as though you were present; in which case the judicatory shall appoint some person or persons to represent you as counsel" (Art 144 of the Constitution).

\* \* \*



## MATTERS TO BE OBSERVED IN SERV- ING A CITATION.

(See Articles 143 and 144 of the Constitution.)

Make two copies of the citation. Attach to each copy thereof a copy of the accusation or complaint. Both copies should be placed into the hands of the person who is to serve it on the accused. He must compare the two copies and all further copies before service, so that he may know that the copies are correct. Service is made by handing to the accused a copy of the citation and accusation or complaint attached, or by leaving them at his present or last known place of residence with an adult member of the family or household, or where this cannot be done, by mailing them in a registered letter.

The person who served the papers shall write on the outside of the original copy he retained, "Served on the within named..... on the ..... day of .....A. D. 19..., by personally handing him (her or each of them) a true and correct copy of this citation and accusations (or complaint) attached, (or by leaving at his, her or their last known place of residence, with an adult member of the family or household, or by sending him a registered letter addressed as follows....., with a true and correct copy of this citation and accusation (or complaint) thereto attached." He signs this and is sworn to it before a Notary Public or Justice of the Peace, who certifies to the oath. The papers are then to be immediately returned to the officer who issued them.

In case of complaint against a Consistory, Spiritual Council, Classis or Synod service upon the Secretary, Stated Clerk or President thereof

is sufficient. A citation must be served at least ten days before the trial, but it is advisable to serve it from fifteen to thirty days before trial if the case is to be heard by a Classis or Synod, so as to give all parties time for preparation. The accuser or complainant must also be notified of the time and place of the trial at least ten days previous.

\* \* \*

## FORM OF CITATION OF A WITNESS.

A citation of a witness is served in the same manner as a citation of an accused person. (See Article 143 of Constitution).

To .....

[Here insert the names of the witnesses you want.]

You are hereby cited to be and appear before .....

[Here insert the judicatory trying the case.]

assembled in special (or regular annual) session .....

[Here insert time and place of hearing.]

Then and there to testify all and singular those things of which you shall know in the matter of charges (or complaint) preferred by.....

[Name of accuser or complainant.]

against .....

[Name of accused.]

for .....

[Here state name of charge or complaint.]

on part of (accuser of accused).

By order of .....

[Insert title of judicatory trying the case.]

.....A. D. 19....

Signed by the officer issuing the citation, giving his name and official title.

# FORM OF NOTICE FOR TAKING TESTIMONY.

.....	}	ACCUSATION (or complaint) brought be- fore ..... the ..... day of ..... A. D. 19... [Here state judicatory's title.]
[Name of accuser.]		
.....		
[Title or name.]		
<i>Against</i>	}	
.....		
[Name of accused.]		

To .....  
[Insert name or title of opposite party, its attorney or committee.]

This is to notify you that testimony will be taken to be read in the hearing of the above named case, on part of accuser (or **accused**) on ..... the ..... day of ..... A. D. 19..., between the hours of .... o'clock A. M. and .... o'clock P. M., of said day before ..... a Notary Public (or a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner), at his office, No. .... Street, of ..... in the County of ..... State of ....., by which testimony said party expects to prove .....

[Here insert briefly point in complaint you wish to prove.]

at which time and place you may cause the witnesses examined to be cross-examined.

.....  
Signature of party, attorney or committee issuing the notice.

Serve a copy of this notice upon the opposite party at least ten days before the testimony is taken. Then prove service as in the case of a citation on back of original notice, and send it to the officer who is to take the testimony, who shall attach it to the testimony and send it or hand it to the party that issued the notice.

## FORM OF TAKING DEPOSITIONS.

<p>.....</p> <p>[Name of accuser.]</p> <p>.....</p> <p>[Or title.]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Against</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p>[Name of accused.]</p>	<p style="font-size: 3em;">}</p>	<p>ACCUSATION (or</p> <p>complaint) brought be-</p> <p>fore .....</p> <p>[The same as in notice.]</p>
---	----------------------------------	---

### DEPOSITIONS OF WITNESSES.

Sworn (or affirmed) and examined before me,  
the undersigned named in notice hereto attached,  
at my office at No. .... Street  
..... on the .....day of  
.....A. D. 19.....

[Name of witness.]

being produced on part of accuser (or accused)  
after being duly sworn (or affirmed) upon his  
solemn oath (or affirmation) deposes and says,  
I reside at No. .... Street .....  
I am .....

[Here give occupation.]

I am .... years of age. I have known .....

[Record the testimony as it falls from the lips of witness.]

[If there is cross-examination mark it "Cross-Examination."]

[In this manner proceed with each witness.]

[If you adjourn to another day, state the day and  
hour of adjournment publicly and make a record of it  
in the order as it comes. Let each witness sign his  
testimony. When all the testimony is taken the officer  
certifies as follows:]

I do hereby certify that the witnesses herein  
above named were duly qualified and examined  
by me at the time and place herein above stated,  
that their testimony was reduced to writing  
under my supervision, as stated by the witnesses,

and each witness signed his depositions in my presence.

.....  
Signature of Notary or Justice or Commissioner, and seal if he has one.

[Attach all the papers—notice, depositions and exhibits or documentary evidence produced, and deliver them to the person that issued the notice.]

\* \* \*

FROM OF OATH.

The witness holding up the right hand, the person administering the oath shall say to the witness:

“You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that the testimony you shall give in the matter now in hearing before us shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and that as you shall answer to God at the great day.”

[The witnesses are to be sworn or affirmed by the president or by any member of the body whom he shall appoint.]

\* \* \*

CERTIFICATE OF A TRANSCRIPT FROM THE RECORD.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript from the records of.....  
[Here insert the title of the judicatory from whose records the transcript is made.]

in the above stated case, of all the proceedings had by said judicatory in said case (or if it is only part of the record state what part).

Witness my hand (and seal if there is one) this ..... day of .....A. D. 19...  
at .....

.....  
Name and title of officer who made the transcript.  
4 49

# STATISTICAL REPORT.

Ministers.	Post Office Address.	Names of Chargees or Congregations.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Congregations.</td></tr> <tr><td>Communicants.</td></tr> <tr><td>Communed.</td></tr> <tr><td>Unconfirmed.</td></tr> <tr><td>Infant Baptisms.</td></tr> <tr><td>Adult Baptisms.</td></tr> <tr><td>Confirmed.</td></tr> <tr><td>From Ref'd Congregations.</td></tr> <tr><td>From other Denominations.</td></tr> <tr><td>By Ver- tificate</td></tr> <tr><td>Renewals of Profession.</td></tr> <tr><td>Dismitted.</td></tr> <tr><td>Excommunicated.</td></tr> <tr><td>Erasures of Names.</td></tr> <tr><td>Deaths, Communicants.</td></tr> <tr><td>Deaths, Unconfirmed.</td></tr> <tr><td>Marriages.</td></tr> <tr><td>Burials.</td></tr> </table>	Congregations.	Communicants.	Communed.	Unconfirmed.	Infant Baptisms.	Adult Baptisms.	Confirmed.	From Ref'd Congregations.	From other Denominations.	By Ver- tificate	Renewals of Profession.	Dismitted.	Excommunicated.	Erasures of Names.	Deaths, Communicants.	Deaths, Unconfirmed.	Marriages.	Burials.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Number of Schools.</td></tr> <tr><td>Officers and Teachers.</td></tr> <tr><td>Scholars, Home Dep't Incl.</td></tr> <tr><td>Students for the Ministry.</td></tr> <tr><td>Benevolent Purposes.</td></tr> <tr><td>Congregational Purposes.</td></tr> <tr><td>Minutes of Synod Wanted.</td></tr> </table>	Number of Schools.	Officers and Teachers.	Scholars, Home Dep't Incl.	Students for the Ministry.	Benevolent Purposes.	Congregational Purposes.	Minutes of Synod Wanted.
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ANNUAL REPORT OF LICENSURES, ORDINATIONS, DEATHS, DIS-  
MISSIONS, ERASURES OF NAMES, SUSPENSIONS, OR DEPOSITIONS  
OF MINISTERS, BY OR IN THE CLASSIS OF.....,  
SYNOD OF....., OF THE REFORMED CHURCH  
IN THE UNITED STATES, FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
DECEMBER 31, A. D. 19

“The Classes, through their respective Stated Clerks, shall make report at least annually to the Stated Clerk of the General Synod of all licenses, ordinations, suspensions, depositions, dismissions, or erasures of names of ministers, together with the time and place; and in the case of the decease of a licentiate or minister, his name and the time and place of decease” (Art. 97, Const.).

No.	Name and Residence of Licentiate or Ordained Minister.	Date and Place of Licensure	Licensed by Classis of	Date and Place of Ordination.	Ordained by Classis of	Members of Committee on Ordination.	Date and Place of Decease.	Memoranda of facts in case of dismission to another church, or of erasure of name in case of transfer of church relations without dismission, or in case of suspension or deposition from the ministry.

# STATISTICAL REPORT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS FOR YEAR ENDING...

Name of Charge.	Name of School or Schools.	Name and P. O. Address of Superintendent.	Officers and Teachers.	Scholars.	Cradle Roll.	Home Department.	Total Enrollment.	Average Attendance.	No. of Books in Library.	Are Reformed Lesson Helps used in the School?	Church Relations.	Contributions.					
												Home Missions.	Foreign Missions.	Orphans' Home.	General Synod's S. S. Work.	Other Benevolence.	Support of School.
					Total.							Home Missions.	Foreign Missions.	Orphans' Home.	General Synod's S. S. Work.	Other Benevolence.	Support of School.
					Senior Department.							Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.
					Intermediate Department.							Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.
					Primary Department.							Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.
												Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.
												Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.
												Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.
												Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed.	Scholars baptized but not confirmed.	Scholars in full church membership.	Scholars confirmed during the year.	Scholars confirmed during the year.



# STATISTICAL REPORT OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES FOR YEAR ENDING.....

Societies distinctly Missionary are not included in this report.

Name of Congregation	Name of Society.	Name and Address of Secretary.	Members.		Contributions.			
			Active.	Associate.	Home Missions.	Foreign Missions	Other Benevolence.	Congregational Purposes.

# ORDER OF BUSINESS OF A CLASSIS.

## ARTICLE

- I. Religious Services.
- II. Calling of the Roll.
- III. Election of Officers.
- IV. Defining the Bar of the House.
- V. Fixing the Hours of Meeting and Adjourning.
- VI. Appointment of Standing Committees.
  1. On Religious Services.
  2. On Minutes of General Synod.
  3. On Minutes of District Synod.
  4. On Minutes of Classes.
  5. On Overtures.
  6. On Examination and Licensure.
  7. On Missions—Home and Foreign.
  8. On Benevolent Institutions.
  9. On Sunday Schools.
  10. On Nominations.
  11. On State of the Church.
  12. On Finance.
- VII. Communications.
- VIII. Parochial Reports.
- IX. Report of the Treasurer.
- X. Reports of Standing Committees.
- XI. Appeals and References.
- XII. Complaints.
- XIII. Nominations and Elections.
- XIV. Appointment of an Executive Committee.
- XV. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business.
- XVI. Necrology.
- XVII. Resumption and Close.
  1. Calling of the Roll.
  2. Reading, Correction and Adoption of Minutes.
- XVIII. Adjournment.

# ORDER OF BUSINESS OF A SYNOD.

## ARTICLE

- I. Religious Services.
- II. Calling of the Roll.
- III. Election of Officers.
- IV. Defining the Bar of the House.
- V. Fixing the Hours of Meeting and Adjournment.
- VI. Appointment of Standing Committees.
  1. On Religious Services.
  2. On Minutes of General Synod.
  3. On Minutes of District Synod.
  4. On Minutes of Classes.
  5. On Overtures.
  6. On Educational Institutions.
  7. On Missions—Home and Foreign.
  8. On Publication.
  9. On Benevolent Institutions.
  10. On Sunday Schools.
  11. On Nominations.
  12. On State of the Church.
  13. On Finance.
  14. On Press.
  15. On Advisory Members.
- VII. Reports of Boards and Communications.
- VIII. Report of the Treasurer.
- IX. Reports of Standing Committees.
- X. Appeals and References.
- XI. Complaints.
- XII. Nominations and Elections.
- XIII. Church Government.
- XIV. Synodical Archives.
- XV. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business.
- XVI. Necrology.
- XVII. Resumption and Close.
  1. Calling of the Roll.
  2. Reading, Correction and Adoption of Minutes.
- XVIII. Adjournment.

# ORDER OF BUSINESS OF GENERAL SYNOD.

## ARTICLE

- I. Religious Services.
- II. Determining the Presence of a Quorum.
- III. Election of Officers.
- IV. Defining the Bar of the House.
- V. Fixing the Hours of Meeting and Adjourning.
- VI. Appointment of Standing Committees.
  1. On Religious Services.
  2. On Minutes of General Synod.
  3. On Minutes of District Synod.
  4. On Minutes of Classes.
  5. On Overtures.
  6. On Correspondence with Sister Churches.
  7. On State of the Church.
  8. On Missions—Home and Foreign.
  9. On Orphan Homes.
  10. On Ministerial Relief.
  11. On Sunday Schools.
  12. On Societies.
  13. On Nominations.
  14. On Finance.
  15. On Press.
  16. On Advisory Members.
- VII. Reports of the Boards and Communications.
- VIII. Report of the Treasurer.
- IX. Reports of Standing Committees.
- X. Appeals and References.
- XI. Complaints.
- XII. Nominations and Elections.
- XIII. Church Government.
- XIV. Appointment of a Judicial Committee.
- XV. Synodical Archives.
- XVI. Publication.
- XVII. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business.
- XVIII. Necrology. [ness.]
- XIX. Resumption and Close.
  1. Calling of the Roll.
  2. Reading, Correction and Adoption [of Minutes.]
- XX. Adjournment.

# THE RULES OF ORDER.

## I. ORGANIZATION.

1. The president shall take the chair at the hour to which the judicatory stands adjourned or is summoned to meet, and shall immediately call the members to order and open the session with the prescribed religious services.

2. In the absence of the president the stated clerk shall call the members to order and put in nomination a president *pro tem.*, who shall preside until the president takes his place or until an election has been held. Should the president and the stated clerk both be absent, the oldest minister in attendance shall preside.

3. The roll shall then be called, on which the names of all those entitled to a seat and having proper credentials shall have been entered and about whose right there is no contest. If a quorum is present, the judicatory shall proceed to business; but if not, any two members present may adjourn from time to time to give opportunity for a quorum to assemble.

4. If a contest is made as to the right of any one claiming a seat, or if there are present two or more sets of delegates from a lower judicatory, the matter shall at once be referred to a committee which shall examine into the case and shall report within twenty-four hours after its appointment.

5. As soon as an organization has been fully effected an election shall be held for such officers as may be required by the Constitution of the Church or the custom of the judicatory. When two or more persons are nominated for an office, a majority of the votes cast shall be required for an election.

6. Immediately after the organization the

president shall define the bar of the house and no one outside of its limits shall have the privileges of a member of the judicatory.

7. A quorum to transact business in any judicatory of the Church shall consist of the number of members required by the Constitution.

## II. DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT.

8. When the president has opened the session and found a quorum present after the first day, he shall cause the minutes of the preceding day to be read, and, if necessary, to be corrected, when he shall declare them approved; and before the final adjournment the remaining proceedings shall be read and corrected; and when no further corrections are required the president shall say: "Shall the minutes be now approved?" If no objections are made, he shall declare them to stand approved.

9. He shall preserve order, guard against a violation of the Constitution of the Church and the rules of order, and endeavor to conduct all business to a speedy and proper conclusion.

10. He shall, as soon as possible after the organization has been effected, appoint the several standing committees required for the prompt accomplishment of the business before the judicatory; and, unless otherwise provided for, he shall appoint all special committees that may be called for in the process of business.

11. He shall keep exact account of all items of business that have been laid over or assigned to a particular day and call them up at the proper time.

12. He shall receive all minutes, reports, communications, etc., addressed to or intended for the judicatory, and with its consent refer them to the appropriate committees.

13. He shall sign the minutes and all addresses or circulars, etc., issued by the judicatory; and shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members.

14. He may state a question sitting, but shall rise to put it and shall say: "As many as are in favor (as the question may be) say 'aye.'" After the affirmation is expressed he shall say: "As many as are opposed say 'no.'" If he is in doubt as to the results or a division is called for, those voting in the affirmative shall rise, stand, and be counted; after which those voting in the negative shall also rise, stand, and be counted. The president shall then announce the result.

15. When a vote is taken by ballot in any judicatory, the president shall vote with the other members; but he shall not vote in any other case, unless the judicatory is equally divided; when, if he does not choose to vote, the question shall be lost.

### III. DUTIES OF THE STATED CLERK.

16. The stated clerk shall have prepared in advance of the time of the meeting of the judicatory a complete roll of its members, and, as soon as possible, perfect a roll of those members present for the use of the president. Whenever any additional members take their seats, he shall add their names, in their proper places, to the said roll.

17. He shall make correct and concise minutes of all proceedings of the judicatory and carefully preserve them. He shall, if required, prepare a correct and authenticated copy of the minutes and transmit them in due time to the higher judicatory for review. He shall read all papers

by order of the president, shall publish due notice of the time and place of all stated meetings, and, by order of the president, of all special meetings.

18. A memorial, communication, or other paper confided to his care shall not be withdrawn from the files without the warrant of the judicatory.

19. He shall make, for convenient reference, a digest of the legislative actions and of all decisions made on constitutional questions or on the rules of order by the judicatory.

#### IV. THE ORDER OF BUSINESS.

20. After the minutes have been read and approved, an opportunity shall be given to announce the presence of recently arrived members or of secundi in order that they may be recognized.

21. Business unfinished at a previous session shall be taken up first, unless a special order has been set for that hour.

22. Reports from permanent committees shall have precedence, unless a matter has been set for a special hour.

#### V. MEMBERS—THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

23. Every member shall be present within the bar of the house while the judicatory is in session, unless excused or necessarily prevented, and shall vote on each question put, unless previously excused, or unless he has a direct personal or pecuniary interest in the determination of such question.

24. Every member, in speaking, shall rise and address himself respectfully to the president, and, having been recognized, shall proceed to address the judicatory. He shall treat the president and his fellow-members with decorum and respect,



shall confine himself to the subject under discussion, and shall avoid all personalities.

25. During the transaction of business members shall not engage in private conversation; in debate they shall not address themselves to any one save the president.

26. When two or more members rise at the same time, the president shall name the one who is to speak first. A member shall not speak on the same question more than twice, nor longer than one-half hour unless by consent of the body. The chairman of a committee, however, may open and close when general debate has been had on a motion reported by him. A member who has spoken on the main question may speak again on an amendment.

27. When a member, in speaking or otherwise, shall transgress the rules of order or deviate from the subject under discussion or in any way act disorderly, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the president, to call him to order. He shall take his seat immediately, unless permitted to explain, when, if the judicatory is satisfied, he may proceed in order; but if the case requires it, he shall be liable to censure or reprimand.

28. A speaker shall not be interrupted unless with his permission, or when he is out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations.

29. While the president is putting a question or a member is speaking, members shall not pass between the president and the speaker or walk across the floor.

30. A motion can not be made while a member is speaking or after the president has begun to take a vote.

31. A member may change his vote before the

president has announced the result, or afterward in case it does not affect the result.

## VI. COMMITTEES—THEIR POWERS.

32. The first-named member of each committee shall be the chairman, unless the committee prefers to elect their own chairman. In the absence of the first-named member or in the event of his refusal to preside, the second member of the committee shall take his place; the same order of succession is to be followed as often as a vacancy occurs.

33. A committee to whom papers have been referred shall return them with its report; and a paper can not go before a committee or become matter for its action, unless it has been properly referred to it.

34. A majority of a committee shall constitute a quorum and it alone can make a report. A minority may submit its views in writing, or any member may submit a motion that contains the view of the minority.

35. A committee may appoint one or more sub-committees in order to facilitate its work by thus distributing it among its several members, but the final report must come from the whole committee.

36. When a special committee has made its report and it is received, the committee is by this act discharged. A report, however, may be recommitted; or the committee may be reappointed for another purpose.

37. A judicatory may at any time resolve itself into a committee of the whole to consider any special matter, whereupon the president shall name some one to preside, and vacate the chair. Such committee may rise at any time, after which the president shall resume the chair and

the chairman of the committee shall report its action, or report progress and ask leave to sit again.

## VII. MOTIONS—THEIR PRECEDENCE.

38. Every motion made to a judicatory and entertained by the president shall, on the demand of any member, be reduced to writing. The president shall state the question or cause it to be read by the stated clerk before it is debated. It shall then be in possession of the house, but may be withdrawn at any time before it has been amended or a decision has been taken on it.

39. When a question is under debate, a motion shall not be entertained excepting it is one of the following motions:

- a.* To adjourn.
- b.* To take recess.
- c.* To lay on the table.
- d.* To take the previous question.
- e.* To postpone to a certain day.
- f.* To refer or commit.
- g.* To amend.
- h.* To postpone indefinitely.

These several motions shall have precedence in the order named; and a motion to refer, to postpone to a certain day, or to postpone indefinitely, having been decided, shall not be entertained again on the same day at the same stage of the question.

40. If a motion under debate contains several parts, any member may request its division and a question shall be taken on each part. A motion to strike out and insert is not divisible.

41. A subject, which has been indefinitely postponed either by the operation of the previous question or by a motion for indefinite postponement or by a motion to lay on the table uncon-

ditionally, shall not again be called up during the same sessions of the judicatory, unless by the consent of three-fourths of the members who were present at the decision.

42. When different motions are made with respect to filling blanks, the longest time and the largest sum shall be put first.

43. A motion shall not be considered as before the House unless it has been seconded and the mover recognized by the president.

#### VIII. AMENDMENTS.

44. When a motion or proposition is under consideration, a motion to amend and a motion to amend that amendment shall be in order, and it shall also be in order to offer a further amendment in the form of a substitute for the entire proposition, and to this substitute an amendment may be offered which shall not be voted upon, however, until the original motion is perfected.

45. A motion to amend cannot be modified after the previous question has been seconded.

46. An amendment to the rules of order shall not be entertained, unless it has been seconded by a majority of the members present.

#### IX. RECONSIDERATION.

47. When a motion or resolution has been offered and carried or has been lost, it shall be in order for any member, who has voted with the majority, to move on the same or succeeding day a reconsideration of it. Such a motion shall take precedence of all motions, excepting the motion to adjourn or to take recess.

48. A motion to reconsider is not debatable, unless the question proposed to be reconsidered was debatable.

## X. THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.

49. The previous question on any motion, after a reasonable time has been allowed to discuss it, may be called. The call, to be entertained, must be made by at least one-fifth of the members present rising in their places for the purpose. The previous question shall be presented in the following form: "*Shall the main question now be put*"? And, until it is decided, it shall preclude all further amendments or debate on the main question. The effect of this motion, when sustained, shall be to bring the judicatory to a direct vote on all the amendments then pending, in their proper order and on the main question itself.

50. The previous question shall apply in questions of privilege as in motions generally.

## XI. QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE.

51. Questions of privilege shall be: 1. Those affecting the rights of the judicatory collectively; its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings. 2. The rights, the reputation, and conduct of the members individually in their representative capacity. They shall have precedence of all questions except to adjourn and to take recess.

52. It shall not be a matter of privilege to have received and entered upon the minutes a protest of a member or members against the action of a judicatory.

52. The ayes and nays on any question shall be recorded when required by any member who dissents from the acts of a judicatory.

## XII. APPEALS.

54. An appeal from the decision of the president on any point of order may be taken by any

member who may briefly state the reasons for his appeal, to which the president may reply if he deem it needful. The vote shall then be taken without further debate. The form of stating the question shall be: "*Shall the decision of the chair stand as the decision of this judicatory?*"

55. A question of appeal cannot be reconsidered after other business has been done.

56. An appeal is not in order while another appeal is pending.

#### XIII. THE MOTION TO LAY ON THE TABLE.

57. The motion to lay on the table may be made to consider more important matters, or to take up the matter at a more convenient time, or quickly to make a final disposition of it.

58. This motion shall take precedence of all other motions except the motion to adjourn, or to take recess, and shall be decided without debate.

59. All that adheres to the subject of the motion goes on the table with it except it pertains to a motion for correcting the minutes.

60. When this motion is made and lost, it cannot be made again until some change has been made in the question under consideration.

61. When a motion to lay on the table has been lost, it may be reconsidered; but when a motion to reconsider is laid on the table, that motion cannot be reconsidered.

#### XIV. MISCELLANEOUS.

62. The rules of order may be suspended by unanimous consent.

63. A motion to amend the rules of order shall lie over one day; and it shall require a two-third vote to carry the amendment.

64. A judicatory may sit with closed doors if, in its judgment, the matter under consideration requires it.

65. Officers, delegates to higher judicatories, members of boards, etc., shall be elected by ballot; but a judicatory may make such elections by acclamation as do not conflict with any existing law.

66. It shall be in order to take recess only when a quorum is present.

67. A motion to take recess may be offered while another question is pending, or when another member is holding the floor providing he gives his consent.

68. The motion to adjourn, to take recess, to lay on the table, or for the previous question, shall be taken without debate.

69. The ayes and nays on any question shall be recorded on the demand of any member.

70. A member shall not retire from a judicatory without the permission of the president, nor withdraw from it to return home without the consent of the judicatory.

71. Before the final adjournment of a judicatory the roll shall be called, and all members absent without permission shall be reported by the stated clerk to the body that they were sent to represent.

72. At the final adjournment, after the judicatory has united with the president in the repetition of the creed and the Lord's prayer, he shall pronounce the apostolic benediction and declare the judicatory now adjourned to meet as ordered.





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